

THE
HISTORY OF SWEDEN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL

OF

ANDERS FRYXELL.

EDITED BY MARY HOWITT.

VOL. I.

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TO
THE MEMORY OF
MY MOST BELOVED MOTHER,
THESE
•
TWO VOLUMES OF SWEDISH HISTORY,
THE FIRST COMPLETED UNDER HER INSPECTION,
ARE
BY HER DAUGHTER DEDICATED,
IN REMEMBRANCE OF THAT LOVE WHICH CAN NEVER RETURN.
AND IN HOPE OF THAT BRIGHT MEETING WHICH SHALL KNOW
NO PARTING FOR EVERMORE.
AMEN.

THE AUTHOR'S
PREFACE TO THIS TRANSLATION.

THE Author of this History of Sweden considers it necessary to impart the following account of the Work, which by means of this Translation is to be made known to the English public.

The plan ever present to his mind, was to collect, and by an artistical treatment of the subject to present, as vividly as his powers permitted, the more remarkable features in the History of Sweden; by which means he hoped to interest a more numerous circle of readers, and to make the history of his fatherland better known than it has hitherto been.

The three first volumes including the time from Odin to Erik XIV (deposed in 1569*) were the Author's first essay, in the compilation of which he considered the taste of the general readers alone, and therefore consulted only the ordinary printed authorities; but in the latter volumes he has more and more availed himself of the hitherto untouched treasures of the Archives; and thus, as well as by means of greater detail, sought on the one hand to diffuse a clearer light over certain events hitherto but partially known, and on the other to offer a comprehensive view of the destinies of his native land.

* The portion here included in two volumes.

This has been the case more especially with the latter volumes, which embrace the period from 1632 to 1660.

The undertaking has met with uncommon success in Sweden. The first volume has already gone through six Editions, and the successive volumes have succeeded in a similar proportion. Translations have also been published in the German and French languages.

ANDERS FRYXELL.

Stockholm, 20th April, 1844.

TRANSLATOR'S. PREFACE.

THE translation of this portion of Swedish History has been to me, I may say, a labour of love—partly from an ardent interest in the subject, partly in memory of a country where I passed eight years of my life, in which I have experienced kindness from many friends that I shall never forget.

I am now far away from Sweden, perhaps never may set foot on Swedish ground again; still it ever recurs to my mind under two forms, like some bright being once seen amidst all the pomp and brilliancy of life on its sunniest side, once again in the mourning weeds of solitude and sorrow—forming two pictures distinctly different and never to be forgotten. Sweden has no railroads, no densely populous mercantile towns, no thickly-sown villages and smiling cottages on almost every acre of land. Sweden is yet very young; her Spring and Winter seem to have in them an intensity of youthful vigour unknown to more temperate climes, and he who has seen, nay heard the amber-coloured vegetation bursting into life and glory on the grey branches of the Swedish oak, late in May; who has stood under the green canopy of her tender-leaved beeches; floated on the surface of her inland seas; or wandered midst her wild flowers of every varied hue, scattered as thickly amidst the grass as leaves upon the boughs; watched the evening Heavens above all this fading into night, and yet not night; he who has fully entered into the spirit and enjoyed these things in their

untold charm, knows what Sweden is in her holiday dress. But when the dark leaden sky descends to one still darker line bounding the horizon of the sea, showing where it yet lies open beyond wide-stretching plains and wildernesses of ice and snow that bear the solitary track of wolves as they leave their forests to seek the water's edge to drink—he who has whirled through those dark sounding woods of tall fir and pine, the home of the fox, the wolf and the bear, where every tree is as a lyre vibrating to each breath of wind with a solemn melody, where the clotted snow lies in balls on every broken trunk, or clothes in wide-spreading fleecy foliage every slender twig—knows what Sweden is in the days of her mourning, her long dark winter. Yet Winter has charms, has beauties, how great I never knew, till I lived amongst rocks and forests, and waterfalls, and wild uncultivated nature in Sweden;—and warm hearts, and warm rooms are there, and kindness and cordiality are there, and much that beautifies and adorns domestic life.

Of her history I will not say much. It may in part be rude, but it accords with the nature of her climate and her soil. The Swedish *Bondc*, when he is what he ought to be, is the Prince among the peasantry of Europe, and we can understand, as we read, the great part he has played in the destinies of his native land, and that which he still bears in her legislation. Few countries can present so grand a line of Sovereigns of one dynasty as that of the house of Wasa; none such a character as that of Gustavus Adolphus. Women do not figure much on these pages, but those who do are Shakspearcan women. Foremost among them all, behold that strangely distinct apparition from half-fabulous times, Kraka, the wife of the renowned Ragnar Lodbrok, who was seen but once to weep, and

then wept tears of blood ; and in later days, Christina Gyllenstjerna and Anna Bjelke who, had they belonged to a nation whose language was more generally known, would long ago have held a place among the most distinguished of their sex for heroism and virtue.

But I forget it is not a panegyric, but a preface I am writing, and need not thus run on. Before I conclude, I would return my thanks to my kind friend, Mrs. Howitt, who takes charge of my book when I am far away. And should this translation ever fall into the hands of the generous Crown Prince of Sweden, now King Oscar I., may it bear to him the grateful thanks of a heart that has long sought to acknowledge her obligation, who when one word would have crushed, forbore to pronounce that word.

ANNE VON SCHULTZ.

London, 16th May, 1844.

THE SWEDISH HISTORY

IS DIVIDED INTO THREE PERIODS, VIZ.:

I.

THE HEATHEN EPOCH TO THE DEATH OF EMUND THE OLD, A.D. 1061. TWO DYNASTIES REIGNED DURING THIS PERIOD, VIZ. THE YNGLINGA AND THE IWARSKA.

II.

THE CATHOLIC EPOCH, FROM A.D. 1061 TO A.D. 1521, DURING WHICH THE STENKIL, SWERKA, ERIK AND FOLKUNGAR DYNASTIES, AND SOME FOREIGN SOVEREIGNS REIGNED.

III.

THE LUTHERAN EPOCH FROM A.D. 1521 TO THE PRESENT TIME, DURING WHICH THE WASA DYNASTY HAS OCCUPIED THE THRONE.



HISTORY OF SWEDEN.

Part I.

HEATHEN EPOCH

FROM 100 BEFORE CHRIST TO A.D. 1061.

INTRODUCTION.

ANCIENT SWEDISH MYTHOLOGY.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE CREATION.

ALL nations have sought, by means of a Mythology, to explain the origin and government of the world, the destiny of man in this life, and his state after death. The belief and ideas entertained by the early Scandinavians on these points may be found detailed in an ancient work entitled the Edda. According to that work there was in the beginning of time, neither earth, ocean, nor sky, but one huge gulf, called Ginnungagap. On the one side of this gulf lay Niflhem, a region of frost and cold; on the other Muspelshem, where Surtur reigns, the region of

fire and light. When the vapours from Niflhem met the rays from Muspelsheim, they obtained life and became a great giant, called Ymer. This giant was evil, as were all his descendants who were called Rimtussar. But the three Gods, Odin, Vile, and Ve, killed Ymer, in whose blood all the Rimtussar were drowned, save Bergelmer, who with his wife saved himself in a boat and continued the race of the Rimtussar. Ymer's body was carried by the Gods into Ginnungagap, and of it they made the earth. The blood was turned into sea and lakes; the bones became mountains; the hair grew into forests; the beard into grass, and the teeth became stones. The skull was raised above the earth, and became the firmament. A dwarf was placed under each corner, called East, West, South and North. The Gods then took sparks from Muspelshem, and placed them as stars in the sky. In the centre of the earth they raised a strong castle made of Ymer's eyebrows. This castle was called Midgård, and there the Gods resided; but the giants were permitted to dwell without on the sea-coasts. The Gods once found on the shore the trunks of two dead trees. Of these, they formed the first human beings, Ask and Embla, from whom the human race have since descended, and they dwelt with the Gods in Midgård.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE GODS.

ODIN is the chief and oldest, and as it were, a father of the other Gods. He is very wise, and has given one of his eyes for permission to draw wisdom out of Mimer's Well. On his shoulders sit two crows,

Hugin and Munin (Prescience and Memory) who fly round the world, and return to relate to Odin all they have heard and seen. He wields in his hand his good lance Gungnir, and rides on his horse Sleipner which has eight feet. All worship him, and Gods and men swear by his name. Wednesday (Wodinsday) is named after him, and his hall is called Walhalla. The souls of most of those who fall in battle come to this place, and are then called Einherjar. They go out every day on the ramparts and fight with each other; but return towards evening to Walhalla. The wounds which they have received heal of themselves, and many fair maidens, called Walkyries, entertain them with mead and roasted pork. The pork is cut from a hog called *Schrinner, which though daily roasted and eaten yet grows again, and becomes entire every morning. Thus the Einherjar are to live on till Ragnarök.*

Asa Tor, or Åke Thor, is the strongest of Gods or men. When he buckles on his belt, Megingjard, he receives double strength. His hammer, Mjolner, crushes all that it strikes, and then returns again to his hand. But if Thor would wield Mjolner, he must wear his iron gauntlets, otherwise he would be unable to lift it. His greatest pleasure lies in pursuing all giants and enchanters whom he destroys with his hammer. At these times he appears seated in his chariot drawn by two he-goats, which in its rapid course produces a terrible sound, while sparks issue from the mountains. This is the thunder, which has hence received its Swedish name, Thordon. Thursday is named after Thor. When he is not fighting against the giants, he rests in his castle, Trudvang, and thus says the Edda will Thor continue to live on till Ragnarök.

* The end of Time.

Frey was the God of the Seasons, and Friday has been named after him. Brage was the God of heroic song. His wife Idun kept in a box the apples of Immortality of which the Gods ate that they might never grow old. These apples were once stolen away, at which time the Gods received much injury, for they grew old and grey-haired. Balder was the name of the God of Innocence, and so beloved that everything on earth gave an oath to his mother Frigg not to injure Balder. So long as he lived, the Gods were invincible. Heimdal sat with his Gjallarhorn and kept watch to hinder the giants from crossing the bridge which led from Heaven to earth. This bridge was then called Bifrost, but is now called the Rainbow.

Frigg was Odin's wife, and held the chief rank amongst the Goddesses; the destinies of men were known beforehand to her. Freya was the Goddess of Love, and had been married to Öder; but when he left her, she mourned exceedingly, and her tears which fell continually were turned into the purest gold.

An Ash, called Ygdrasil, is the largest of all trees. Its branches shade the whole earth, and its top reaches up to Heaven. It has three roots, of which one reaches to Ginnungagap where is Mimer's Well in which all wisdom is preserved. The second extends to Niflhem where it is constantly gnawed by the dragon Nidhögg. The third reaches to Midgård. At this root is the holy Urdar Brunn or Well, where the Nornor or Fates dwell. Their names are Urd (the Past); Verdandi (the Present); and Skuld (the Future). They determine all that takes place upon earth, and even the Gods themselves must submit to the law of the Fates.

CHAPTER III.

OF LOKE.

LOKE was a descendant of the Rimtussar and was evil in mind and purpose as they were; but by his cunning, and his crafty tongue, had contrived to insinuate himself among the Asar (the Gods). He had three children, by a giantess, who were all evil; viz. the Midgärds Snake, Fenris Wolf, and Hel. Odin threw the Midgärds Snake into the sea, where he grew to such a size that he encircled the earth, and bit his own tail. Fenris Wolf was bound to a rock; but Hel was cast down to Niflhem, there to rule over all those who died of old age and sickness. Hel has been named after her. Thus shall these three remain till Ragnarök.

It was a favourite amusement of the Gods to shoot at Balder, and laugh to see how arrows, lances, stones, and whatever missile was aimed at him glanced aside without wounding him; and all thought that this was greatly to his honour. This made Loke envious. He discovered that Frigg had neglected to take the oath of a little plant called the Mistletoe. He therefore went, and plucking it made of it a lance which he gave to Höder the Blind, one of the Gods, begging him to throw it at Balder, and thus conduce to Balder's honour. Höder replied that he could not throw the lance, because he could not see. Then Loke aimed the lance for Höder, who cast it so that Balder was pierced, and fell dead to the ground. This was the greatest misfortune by which Gods and men could be overtaken. One of the Gods rode to Hel's dwelling to redeem Balder; but Hel answered that she was to keep him unless the whole world would weep his death.

Then the Gods sent out messengers, and desired that every thing in the world should weep the death of Balder. This was^a also done, and every thing which has life, both Gods and men, plants and animals, stones and earth, wept the death of Balder; but on his way home, the messenger met a giant woman named Tock, who refused to weep for Balder. Hel therefore retained him in her power. The Gods were afterwards told that it was Loke in Tock's shape, who had caused them this second sorrow. They therefore sought for him, bound him on three rocks, and hung a snake over him, in such a manner, that the poison dropped on Loke's face. The Edda further relates that his wife, Sigyn, sits by him and receives the poison in a dish. When it is full and she goes to empty it, the poison then drops on Loke's face, and then with his agonized struggles the whole world shakes. And thus shall Loke lie till Ragnarök.

CHAPTER IV.

RAGNARÖK.

THE last days of the world are called Ragnarök, or the Twilight of the Gods. Then shall there be constant war and bloodshed. Brothers shall murder brothers, children will not spare their parents, and numberless will be the crimes committed. This shall be followed by a dreadfully severe winter which shall last three years without any summer. The serpent of Midgård shall writhe up from the bottom of the sea, and come on shore; upon which the whole ocean shall, roaring, overleap its boundaries. The earth will begin to quake, and everything to be rent in pieces, and Loke and the

Fenris Wolf shall be set at liberty. Then shall Surtur come from Muspelshem and ride up to Bifrost which will break in pieces under his feet. Then he with Loke, the serpent of Midgård, the Fenris Wolf, and all the Rimtussar will take the field on a wide plain called Wigrid.

When Heimdal sees this, he will arise and blow aloud his Gjallarhorn, so that the whole earth shall re-echo to the sound. Then will Odin ride to Mimer's Well, seeking counsel, but finding none. Ygdrasil shall shake, and all in Heaven and earth shall tremble. The Asar shall array themselves to battle, and ride forth with the Einheriar to the Plain Wigrid. First shall ride Odin with his noble lance Gugner. The Fenris Wolf shall advance upon him gaping so wide, that while the lower portion of the jaw razes the ground, the other shall reach up to Heaven; and were there more room, he would stretch it yet wider open. The Fenris Wolf shall thus swallow Odin; but he himself finally cut to pieces by Widar the Chaste, the son of Odin. Thor will encounter with the snake of Midgård and slay him; but nine steps further on, himself shall fall suffocated by the Serpent's poison. Loke and Heimdal shall mutually slay each other. Then shall the sun and moon become black, and the stars shall fall from Heaven. Surtur shall scatter fire around which shall set the whole earth in a blaze, and it shall finally sink to the bottom of the sea.

After this shall come a new and perfect world; and evil is now passed. From the bosom of the ocean shall arise an ever-blooming earth, with falling streams and self sown fields. The sun has borne a daughter as fair, who now shall wander in her mother's* path through

* The sun in Swedish as in German is feminine.—TR.

the sky. Balder the Good shall return, and with him all the just and righteous, and a new race shall inhabit the earth. The Almighty, whose name may not be uttered, shall now come to judge and govern all. The virtuous shall dwell in the glorious castle Gimle which is brighter than the sun, and covered with gold. But far away lies the hold called Narstraud, with its gates turned towards the north. The walls of its courts are of woven serpents, whose heads hang downwards and vomit forth venom, so that streams of poison flow upon the floors. And here shall the perjured, and murderers, and other evil men, dwell to all Eternity.

HEATHEN EPOCH.

BOOK I.

OF ODIN AND HIS SUCCESSORS.

CHAPTER I.

OF SWEDEN IN THE REMOTEST TIMES.

OUR earliest traditions shed but little light upon the state of Sweden before the Christian era. The country was covered with vast forests, the inhabitants of which led a wandering life supporting themselves chiefly by fishing and hunting. Their weapons were clubs, stone knives, and bows and arrows. Their clothes were the skins of wild beasts; their dwellings, small huts half-buried beneath the ground. Nothing is known of any regular government, or the name of any King at this period. Odin and Thor were worshipped as Gods. The Greeks called the land Thule, and the Romans Scandinavia, describing it as a cold and desert country.

CHAPTER II.

ODIN'S ARRIVAL IN SWEDEN.

ABOUT a century before the birth of Christ, in a region to the north-east of the Black Sea, lived a people called the Asar, the name of whose chief was Sigge Fridulfson. The Romans, at that time had subdued all the neighbouring nations, leaving the Asar no peace, when Sigge resolved to emigrate with his people to a new country further north. The Asar at this time were more ingenious, and further advanced in all the arts

than the rest of the northern nations. Sigge, in particular, was remarkable for wisdom and prudence. He knew that Odin was worshipped by all the northern lands; he therefore commenced his wanderings with much solemnity, declaring himself to be Odin, and his chiefs the other Gods. Thus he past through many countries, as Russia, Saxony and Westphalia, placing his sons everywhere as Kings. He stopped some time in Denmark, on the Island of Fyen, and founded there the town called Odinsec, bearing his name; but learning that there were large fruitful tracts to the north in Sweden, he left Denmark to his son Sköld, who built a town called Leire in Seland, where his descendants reigned long under the name of Sköldungar. Odin himself sailed up to Sweden, in which, at that time, reigned a King called Gylfe, the first whom history mentions. He received Odin with sacred honours, and opened his kingdom to him. Odin proceeded to found a town on Lake Mälar, which he called after his own name Sigtuna, or Sigge's Home. He made his own residence, and founded a temple there; but divided the neighbouring country among his chiefs whom he appointed to preside at the sacrifices, and to assist him in the administration of justice; these chiefs were termed Diar, and looked upon as Gods; but Odin was considered as chief of all.

He was possessed of a handsome and majestic mien; and when he sat at a feast with his friends, his presence gladdened r'l; but to his enemies he was cruel and terrific. His eloquence was such, that whatever he said was alone thought to be true. He introduced the art of poetry into the north, and was the first who there used the art of writing. His letters were called Runor, and were carved in wood; the people believed

he could work charms with them. It is said that he understood another species of sorcery, called Seid, so that with a few syllables he could extinguish fire, quiet the sea, and change the wind. He could even let his body lie as dead, while his soul in the shape of a bird, a fish or some other animal, carried his messages all round the earth. He had a ship called Skidbladner which could be folded together like a sheet of paper, and had fair wind in whatever direction he pleased, which probably signifies that he was the first in the North who used sails, and understood tacking in contrary wind. His men rushed forward in combat with great strength and impetuosity, using no defensive armour, whence they were called Berserks, or Mail-less, and such an attack was called Berserkagång.

CHAPTER III.

ODIN'S LAWS.

ODIN imposed a tax for every nose, or person in the country: this was called the nose-tax. He also ordered that every dead person with his possessions should be burnt on a pyre, and the higher the flame arose, the greater was the glory of the dead in Walhalla. The ashes were to be buried, and cairns raised above the graves of men of high descent; but Bauta stones were to be set up to the memory of those who had done great actions. He also taught that those who had fallen in combat, or otherwise met with a violent death, would come to him in Walhalla, and there enjoy great happiness. He therefore chose not to die a straw-death (in his bed on straw), but when he understood that his end was approaching, he caused himself to be pricked or marked with the point of a lance (Gejrsodd) and

thus died, saying he was going before to Walhalla to prepare great joy for his followers. The people now believed that he had gone to Asgård, or the dwelling of the old Gods; and they imagined that he often revealed himself to them in sleep when great wars were at hand, awarding victory to some, and inviting others to come to him in Walhalla, and both lots were considered good alike. From this belief, the people derived great valour in battle, and courage in despising death. Those who lived to grow old caused themselves to be marked with the Gejrsodd, or threw themselves down steep rocks, (of which many are shewn in Sweden to this day, under the name of Ättestupor), rather than die a despised, natural death.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SUCCESSORS OF ODIN.

NJORD became Droth in Sigtuna after Odin. In his time seasons were favourable and harvests plentiful, so that after his death he was worshipped as the God of winds and weather. He was succeeded by his son Yngwe Frey; these two had entered the kingdom together with Odin, and were considered as Gods. Yngwe removed the court from Sigtuna to Upsala, where he built a large temple. He appointed certain estates all over the kingdom for the maintenance of the King, and the supply of the sacrifice in the temple. These were called Upsala-öde or estates, but are now called Kongs-gårdar, or royal-estates. In Yngwe Frey's time, it is said there was peace over all the earth, and it is supposed that the Birth of Christ happened at this period. Yngwe Frey was interred at Upsala,

where the cairns of many of the old Kings yet remain. His statue, together with those of Odin and Thor, was set up in the Upsala temple.* The people were collected there three times a year for sacrifice and counsel; the greatest meeting was at Midwinter, and was called Allshärjarting, (the Meeting of the whole Host), or Ting allra Swia, (all Sweden's Ting or Assize), when the King standing upon one of the cairns or funereal heights, took counsel with all the people collected, heard their complaints, and laid his plans before them, with which they expressed content or dissatisfaction by loud cries, striking their shields, and clashing of arms.

The descendants of this Yngwe Frey were called Ynglingar, after him, and were long presidents over the sacrifices in Upsala, as well as the possessors of supreme power in Sweden.

CHAPTER V.

A G N E S K E P P S B O .

THE Ynglingar who reigned in Upsala were formerly called Drotts; but Dyggve, the tenth in succession, first assumed the title of King. His grandson was called Agne. He was a great hero in war, and had many ships with which he made continual predatory expeditions or Wikingatåg, for which reason he received the surname of Skjafvrboandi or Skeppsbo (the Dweller in Ships). One summer he set forth with all his troops to make a descent on Finland, where they committed great ravages. Froste, the leader of the Finns, collected a force and advanced against Agne. A severe conflict ensued, in which Froste fell with a consider-

able number of his people. Agne then marched round the country, subdued it, and on returning home carried with him Fröste's daughter Skjalf, and his son Loge as prisoners. On his return to Sweden, he anchored his fleet at Stocksund, as the straits were then called, through which the Lake Mälär empties itself into the sea, and where Stockholm is now situated. At that time, this place was covered with thick dark forests. King Agne here celebrated his nuptials with Skjalf, and at her request, caused a funeral feast for her father to be held at the same time. King Agne wore round his neck a precious gold chain, which had been promised by one of Agne's ancestors as a dower to his bride; but he afterwards rejected her, and refused the promised portion; on which a witch decreed, as a punishment, that this chain should bring death to the chiefs of the Ynglingar. Agne had drunk much at Fröste's funeral feast, and when he laid himself down to slumber in his tent, Skjalf bade him take care of his chain, whereon he fastened it tight round his neck.

When he had fallen asleep, Skjalf bound a strong rope to the chain, and drew it up over the branches of a tree which stood above the tent. With the assistance of her men, she then hauled Agne up in the air, where he hung till he died. Herself, with Loge and the other Finns, stole on board their ships and returned to Finland. This is said to have happened at the place where Stockholm now stands, and the spot was long called Agnes-fit or Agnes-Strand in memory of the King.

Agne's two sons, Alrik and Erik, took the kingdom after him, and the Swedish sceptre began now to be borne by two brothers, whereas till this time it had never had but one King.

BOOK II.

OF HJALMAR AND INGEBORG.

CHAPTER I.

OF KING ANE THE OLD.

THE sixteenth King of the Ynglingar race was called Ane. He feared war, and therefore remained quietly at home in his own kingdom, being much addicted to sacrifice. He was conquered and driven out by two foreign Kings, but survived them both, and returned to the throne in Upsala. The last time he was one hundred years old. It is said that he then every tenth year sacrificed one of his sons to Odin that he might live long, and that he received ten years' life for each son. Thus he sacrificed nine sons, and lived to one hundred and ninety; but was so weak that he was obliged to lie in bed, and to suck nourishment from a horn like an infant. He notwithstanding desired a still longer life, and therefore ordered that his tenth son should be sacrificed; but this the Swedes would not permit, and thus Ane died of old age, without sickness or pain; whence such a death has been called after him. Anesot, and was considered little commendable by our forefathers. Ane himself obtained the surname of Old.

CHAPTER II.

OF HJALMAR THE BOLD, AND ÖRWAR ODD.

AT this time there lived in Norway a renowned champion who had just begun to distinguish himself in war, and was famed for bravery. His name was Odd; and he was called Örwar Odd, *i. e.* Arrow Odd, for he had enchanted arrows which never missed the mark at which he aimed, and then returned to his hand. His first expedition was to Bjarmaland. He was exposed to great dangers, but overcame them all by bravery and boldness, acquiring at the same time much wealth, so that this voyage gained him great renown all over the north. He then overcame many Vikings. Being ready to set out, he asked his father, one spring, where he should find the bravest men and the most resistance, for he now thought himself fit for the highest deeds of prowess. The father then said, "You must seek for Hjalmar the Bold, and his foster brother Tord Stafngalm, who live in Upsala at King Ane's court, and are the champions of his land, for they are the boldest men I know." Odd returned thanks for this advice, and set out for Sweden.

One evening he anchored off a little promontory and landed there. He presently discovered fifteen ships which belonged to Hjalmar and Tord; but the crews were on shore amusing themselves with wrestling. Odd determined to try if these men really were as courageous as they were reported to be, now divided his people into two bodies, and gave orders to his brother Gudmund to advance with his men along the promontory, while Odd conducted his to the wood behind Hjalmar's people. Gudmund and his men now

set up a shout, which was soon echoed by one from Odd and his troop. But it is said that Hjalmar and his men paid no attention to the first shout, and when they heard the second behind them, they stopped while it lasted ; but immediately resumed their game as if it mattered nothing. Odd and Gudmund now drew back and met. Odd said : " More will be needed here than shouting and crying, and these men seem not to fear the fight." " What shall we then do ?" asked Gudmund, and Odd replied, " That they would not unawares attack such men as these, but wait till morning." And so it happened. The second day when the dawn began to appear, Odd and his men arrayed themselves to battle, and sailed towards Hjalmar. Hjalmar asked, " Who commands this people ?" " He is called Odd," answered Odd himself. " Are you that Odd who went to Bjarmaland ?" asked Hjalmar again. " That am I," answered Odd ; " and I would try which of us is the better man." " We can try that," replied Hjalmar ; " but how many ships have you ?" " Five," said Odd, " how many hast thou ?" " I have fifteen," answered Hjalmar ; " but our numbers shall not be unequal. I will lay ten ships aside, and go against thee with five." " Manfully spoken," said Odd.

Whereupon they armed themselves, and began the most violent combat which lasted till evening. The chiefs then caused the shield of peace to be held up, (it was white, and the showing of it signified a cessation of hostilities) ; and Hjalmar asked, " How Odd thought the day had gone ?" Odd was well satisfied. Hjalmar asked, " If he chose to continue the sport any longer ?" " Aye," answered Odd, " for I have never met with braver or stronger handed men."

They now went to their tents, and let their men

attend to themselves and bind their wounds. The next day they renewed the strife; and when in the evening the shield was held up: Odd asked how Hjalmar liked the sport? "Well," answered Hjalmar. "Wilt thou more of it?" "That I will," said Odd; "and now we shall make a fair trial of our swords." Then spoke Tord Stafngalm and asked, "Is there much wealth on your ships?" Odd returned a negative answer, saying, "That this summer they had won nothing yet." "Here then," said Tord, "are the wisest of men found fighting merely through emulation and temerity. To my mind it would be much better that we should enter into an alliance." "It pleases me well," said Odd; "but I know not what Hjalmar will say to it." Hjalmar was content, provided Odd agreed for himself and his people to enter into Hjalmar's Viking Code. "I must hear it first before I agree to it," answered Odd. Hjalmar then named the conditions:

1°. Never to eat raw meat, or drink blood, for that they are considered as food for wolves, and not for men.

2°. Never to plunder merchant boats, or peasants; but to pay for every thing which they went on shore to provide.

3°. Never to offer violence to women. He who breaks these shall lose his life, whoever he may be.

Odd agreed to these conditions, and they entered into a fraternal compact. This took place according to custom in the following manner. They cut a very broad band of turf, so long that the ends hung down to the ground, and lifted up the band on their spears. Hereupon both the men stepped under it, wounded themselves, and let their blood run together to the ground. They then knelt, and swore they would par-

take one and the same fate, as well as revenge each other's deaths as brothers. All the Gods were called to witness this oath, which was finally confirmed by clasping each other's hands. After this, the foster-brothers, as they were now called, set forth in arms together, and gained great booty during the summer. In autumn, Hjalmar invited Odd to accompany him to Upsala, and pass the winter there. Odd agreed, and they did so. King Ane received them well, and after some time gave Odd four estates.

Ane had a daughter named Ingeborg, and she was the wisest and fairest of maidens. One day when Odd and Hjalmar were conversing; Odd said, "Why dost thou not ask the King's daughter in marriage, for I see you understand each other?" "Truly I have sued for Ingeborg," answered Hjalmar; "but the King will only marry her to one who bears the kingly title." "Then," said Odd, "we will collect our people in the summer, and offer the King two conditions; either to fight with us, or to give thee Ingeborg." Hjalmar replied, "This may I not do, for Ane is my King, and I have sworn fealty to him as his champion."*

Thus the friends passed the winter together, and in spring renewed their expeditions, by which they won great riches, for none could resist them; and in autumn they returned to winter in Upsala. During one of these voyages, Odd received a silken shirt from a Princess in Ireland, which was so charmed in the weaving, that steel could not penetrate it, and as long as Odd wore it, neither fire, water, nor sword could

* The champion or protector of the land, took upon himself to defend and protect the country against all hostile attacks, and it was always requisite that he should be a great and renowned warrior.

injure him, provided he did not fly, for then it could no longer protect him. Odd valued this as a precious gift, and never took off the shirt.

CHAPTER III.

ANDGRIM'S SONS.

At that time there lived in Bolmsö, or Bornholm as it is now called, a warrior whose name was Andgrim, and his wife Eywor. They had twelve sons, the eldest was called Angantyr, and was a head taller than the rest, as well as braver and superior to other men. He had received from his father the good sword Tírfing which had been made by the dwarfs for Odin's grandson Swafurlane, and possessed the virtue of piercing all, and of giving the victory to him who wielded it. The other eleven brothers were also great warriors; and the fighting-madness or Berserkagång often seized them, so that they slew their own men, and landing from their ships fought with trees and stones. Therefore they wandered about alone, never meeting resistance, because the people dreaded them, and an evil report went out against them through the land.

One Yule eve (the Midwinter festivity) these brothers were sitting at home with their father promising deeds of future valour as the custom then was. Hjorward boasted that he would marry Ingeborg, the daughter of King Ane in Sweden. Accordingly the following spring these brothers set out for Upsala, and presented themselves before Ane, to whom Hjorward declared his message, requiring an immediate answer. Ane began to hesitate, considering of what high descent, and what renowned warriors these brothers were. But when

Hjalmar heard Hjorward's desire, he stepped before King Ane and said :

"Remember, Sire, how much respect and service I have shown you, as well as how many years I have protected your kingdom ! Therefore I beg that you will give me your daughter whom I long have loved. And it is more seemly that you let this honour accrue to me than to these strangers who have committed but crimes, both in your own and other kingdoms."

Then was Ane in a sore strait ; but he finally made answer that he could not prefer either of these illustrious men before the other, but would leave Ingeborg to choose for herself. Ingeborg then affirmed that she would have him for her husband who was already known to her by many good qualities : thus accepting Hjalmar. Hjorward then challenged him to a single combat* or Samsö, calling Hjalmar the object of every man's contempt if he should avoid this combat ; but Hjalmar replied he would not fail to come. On this, Andgrim's sons returned home. When they gave their father an account of their journey and of the challenge, he warned them that they would require good swords and weapons, for they would now meet with strong-handed and tough Vikings.

CHAPTER IV.

THE COMBAT ON SAMSÖ.

ON the appointed day, Hjalmar and Odd arrived at Samsö having two well-armed ships with them. The foster-brothers went on shore to look if Andgrim's sons

* Holmgång. The word actually signifies descent on an island, and figuratively a single combat, for these were held generally on islands in the sea, or within small enclosures on shore, which were then also called islands.

were come. Hjalmar was fully armed, but Odd had but an ax in his hand, with which he cut wood for a block which had been broken in the ship. During their absence, Andgrim's sons came to their ship, when the fighting madness attacked them, so that they bit their shields, cried aloud, and went aboard six on each vessel, hewing down everything that presented itself; but the crews were composed of men of such courage that not one fled, but each kept his place, and fell at his post. When all were slain, the Berserks shouted, "Our father Andgrim has lied when he called these stout and strong-fisted men, and we ought to return and kill the worthless old man as a reward for his lie." They then laid each ship's company on their places at the oars, and finding that both the steersmen were wanting, they understood that Hjalmar and Odd were not amongst the slain. The fighting madness then passed away from them, and as usual left them weak and exhausted as sick men.

Hjalmar and Odd now returned, and saw the Berserks and what they had done. Then quoth Hjalmar :

Men full of courage
Descend from their vessels,
Twelve valiant brothers
To shiver our lances.
We shall this evening
Guests be with Odin,
Two men of courage.
The twelve they may live still.

This was the only time that despairing words were heard from Hjalmar's lips ; but Odd answered :

Thus will I answer,
Such word of thine :
They shall this evening
Guests be with Odin.
They, twelve Berserker,
We two shall live still.

“Or perhaps thou wouldst fly to the forest?” said Odd.

But Hjalmar replied :

Never will we fly
Before any enemy ;
Even should they seem
Too many for us.

Then Odd hastened to the forest and cut a club, with which the foster-brothers went down to the shore, where they met the sons of Andgrim. One of them was a head taller than the rest, and carried a sword which shone like sunbeams. This was Angantyr with the sword Tírfing. Then Hjalmar asked, “Wilt thou brother fight with Angantyr, for I depend more on my shirt than on your armour?”

Hjalmar said: “If you think it more difficult to fight with Angantyr, I will do it ; for when did we ever take our arms, and I let you go before me when it came to the point?”

“Thou dost ill now,” said Odd ; but Hjalmar would have it so.

After this they agreed with Angantyr that he who fell should not be plundered, but placed in his cairn with all his arms and ornaments. Then Hjalmar and Angantyr advanced on each other with mighty blows, so that a sharper attack was never seen ; but Odd called on the other eleven, saying :

One shall to one
Stand in the combat,
If men of honour
And courage there fail not.

They agreed to this, and Odd and Hjórvard advanced against each other. The silk shirt however

was of such avail, that nothing wounded Odd ; but he dealt so many blows with his club that he slew Hjordward first, and then the other ten brothers one after the other, and still had received no wound. Then he went to the place where Hjalmar and Angantyr had fought. Angantyr was then fallen, but Hjalmar sat leaning against a hillock on the ground. Odd went to him, and quoth :

How art thou Hjalmar ?
Why changes thy colour ?
Thou art sore troubled
With deep and great gashes.
Cleft is thy helmet,
Pierced is thy armour ;
Thy life I see now
On its last journey.

Hjalmar answered :

Wounds have I sixteen,
And a cleft helmet.
Dark is it before my eyes,
I cannot walk now.
Angantyr's sword
Drank of my heart's blood,
With its keen edge
Tempered with poison.

“Now I have seen the greatest sorrow I can suffer in life,” said Odd ; “and thy counsel has turned out ill, otherwise we should here have gained a glorious victory.” Hjalmar answered : “Every man must die at last ; but thou shalt carry my farewell home to Sweden.”

He then sung his death-song, declaring his preference of a sea-life before a peaceful one on shore ; his parting with the King's fair daughter, and desiring his helmet and cuirass to be brought into the King's halls

and shewn to all, when he thought her heart would heave at the sight of the cuirass cloven at the breast; and ended by desiring the ring of red gold to be taken off his finger and given to her as a confirmation of the words she had spoken herself at their parting, that they should never meet again.

He then gave the ring to Odd, and afterwards requested to be carried to Upsala, and not buried amidst these wicked and wizard-like Berserks. He then sent his last salutation to his brothers in arms, and sung finally.

Sitting with monarchs
 Many a warrior
 Drinks ale with joy
 In Upsala city.
 Many a one bows him
 Before the strong mead-cup.
 But me, my wounds keep me
 Here on the sea shore.

The crow from the south now
 Comes over the heath,
 The high-soaring eagle
 Followeth after.
 He shall suck up
 The red blood, the frothy.
 I have cut eagle's food
 Now for the last time.

Thus died Hjalmar. Odd drew all the Berserks together, letting each retain his weapons, and laid Tírfing under Angantyr's head. He then threw up great mounds over them, and did the same with his own men. He then carried Hjalmar down to the ship. It is related of Odd, that he believed neither in Odin or Thor, or any other divinity save his own strength and fortune, which was said to have been so great

that if he but hoisted his sail he obtained favourable wind for whatsoever place he desired to visit. In this manner he now sailed to Sweden. He drew the ship on shore, took the body of Hjalmar on his shoulders, and thus returned to Upsala. He laid Hjalmar down without the hall door, and then entered, carrying his friend's helmet and cuirass in his hand. These he laid down before Ane, and related the fall of Hjalmar. Afterwards he went to Ingeborg, who was seated in her chair embroidering a mantle for Hjalmar. Odd presented himself before her, and said: "Hjalmar saluted thee, and sent thee this ring in his dying moment." Ingeborg took the ring, looked at him, answered nothing, and sunk down dead at his feet. Then Odd took her up, and bore her forth, and laid her in Hjalmar's arms, saying: "Now may the dead enjoy that bliss which fate denied the living."

Odd afterwards desired that Hjalmar's funeral feast should be celebrated, and he and Ingeborg buried in the same mound. King Ane allowed him to do as he pleased, and thus a stately cairn was raised above them. Odd afterwards wandered wide about the world, and none could ever conquer him. He also reached Jerusalem, and became a Christian, and many tales are told of his prowess.

But the great cairns over the warriors in Samsö were seen for many hundred years, and a saying went out amongst the people, that at night great fires blazed out of them, and a great sound was heard over the whole island from the entombed Berserks.

BOOK III.

OF KING KRAKE AND KING ADIL.

CHAPTER I.

OF KING ADIL IN UPSALA.

THE twentieth King of the Yngling was called Adil. He was a very rich and powerful King, but was besides parsimonious, cruel, deceitful and envious. He was also much given to the service of idols and sacrifice, so that the people esteemed him a magician. He was himself no great warrior, therefore maintained twelve Berserks at his court, who should defend his kingdom against foreign invasions.

Helge was the name of the King of the Sköldungar race, who reigned at this time in Denmark. He was a very superior man, brave and fearless towards his enemies, mild and pleasant towards his friends, and therefore loved and feared by all. He made Yrsa, an unknown woman from Saxony, who was both fair, wise, and gentle, his Queen; but when it was afterwards discovered that Yrsa was his daughter, she travelled back to her mother although she loved Helge much, and though he would willingly have retained her. Then King Adil courted her, and she was obliged, however distressed, to consent, and accompany him to Upsala; but their intercourse never became very friendly.

King Helge lived meanwhile in continual sorrow and weariness since Yrsa had left him. Feeling at last a

craving desire to visit her in Upsala, he prepared for the purpose a strong army, for he intended at the same time to punish Adil for venturing to take her to wife, without asking Helge, her father's consent. When this expedition was spoken of in Upsala, King Adil determined by Yrsa's advice to receive Helge well, her project being to reconcile the two Kings. When, therefore, Helge laid to on the coast, messengers were despatched to him, inviting him to be the guest of the King. Helge accepted the invitation, and thus rode up to court with a part of his people, leaving the greater number still with his ships. A very splendid feast had been prepared for him; but when Helge saw his daughter Yrsa, he was so overjoyed that he forgot the entertainment and everything else, and desired only to speak with her. This filled Adil with rage and jealousy. He sent out his Berserks and other troops, and laid them in ambush waiting King Helge's return to his ships, and when he was riding back he was attacked unawares, surprised by superior numbers, so that he finally fell, after a brave and manly resistance. King Adil gloried much in his victory over so mighty a King; but Yrsa said, that such a deceitful victory was nothing to boast of, and that since Helge had thus been murdered, she would henceforth, whenever she could, seek the injury of King Adil and his Berserks.

CHAPTER II.

OF SWIPDAGER.

A RICH peasant in Sweden called Swipur had three sons, Swipdager, Bejgader and Hwitserk, and all three were strong and courageous. When Swipdager was

eighteen years old, he went to his father saying : " Our life will become odious to us if we are to remain up here amongst the mountains without seeing any one, therefore I intend to go to King Adil and see if he will accept me." The old man advised him against this, telling him how avaricious and deceitful Adil was known to be ; but Swipdager opined that one must venture something to win honour and renown in the world. He accordingly procured excellent arms, and a good horse with which he set out.

When he arrived, he saw how the courtiers were carrying on all sorts of games outside the castle ; but King Adil sat on a golden chair, and looked on with all his Berserks around him. Swipdager rode boldly forward, saluted the King, told his name, and then seated himself to look on the games. The Berserks looked sour at him, and said to the King, " That they had a mind to try if this man was as strong and manly as he appeared." The King agreed, but as evening was now coming on, all the people went into the hall of the castle. The Berserks then went up to Swipdager and asked him if he were a warrior, to which he answered, " That he was not at least inferior to any of them." This made them wrathful, and they asked " if he dared to fight with them, and that if so, he should need more than boastful and contemptuous words." Swipdager said, " That he was ready to fight with them in turn, one at a time ;" but the King commanded them to wait till the morning. Queen Yrsa meanwhile received Swipdager with all honour and good cheer ; which when the Berserks saw, they said to her, " That they knew very well she desired their death, for King Helge's sake ; nevertheless they would find means to conquer her pride, for they in no wise feared the newly

arrived stranger," and upon this they parted for the night.

The following morning they held their combat in the castle-yard, and many people were assembled to look on. Many and mighty blows were distributed; but it was easy for every one to perceive that Swipdager was the better man, for the one Berserk after the other fell before him. When he had killed four of them, the King arose, saying: "Thou hast now done me great mischief, and shall pay it with thy life." He therefore ordered his men to seize upon Swipdager; but Queen Yrsa with many followers presented herself from the other side and assisted him, so that peace was made this time. In the evening, when the King remarked Swipdager once go out alone, he exhorted his Berserks to hasten after him, and revenge the death of their companions. They did so, but though all eight fell upon him at one time, they could not overcome him, and when the attendants heard the noise, they rushed out, and the King was compelled to tell them to finish the strife, after which he banished the Berserks because they had been unable to despatch a single man. In their place at Queen Yrsa's instigation he named Swipdager, champion of his land, as one who was equal to the other twelve Berserks.

Now these exiled champions began to ravage King Adil's country; but Swipdager lead out the troops against them, killing some and routing others, and returning with victory and renown to Upsala. Shortly after they assembled an army and recommenced their ravages. It was then agreed that Swipdager with a third of the Swedish troops should meet them, while Adil with his warriors, and the rest of the troops should fall on them behind in the midst of the fight. When the

battle begun, the Berserks had twice as many men, which caused a speedy clearance in Swipdager's ranks. In vain they looked for help from King Adil. He stood motionless with his troops in a wood behind the Berserks, and would not advance till the battle was done, intending then to join the party who had gained the victory. Swipdager was therefore in a great strait; he defended himself bravely, but had already lost an eye and received many other severe wounds, so that he began to think that he should certainly sup with Odin; but just at that moment, his two brothers Bejgader and Hwitserk arrived, sent by the old man, Swipur their father, to assist him. They advanced boldly in the fight, soon found the Berserks, who one after the other were compelled to bite the ground. This fortunate assistance cheered Swipdager's people, so that the loss began to be greatest on the Berserks' side, and the remainder finally yielded themselves into the power of the brothers. King Adil now marched out of the wood, exalting their victory, after which the whole company returned to Upsala, and Swipdager was for a time forced to keep his bed on account of his wounds, during which time Queen Yrsa nursed and attended him. Scarcely, however, was he recovered, before he and his brothers presented themselves to King Adil, saying that they would seek another King, who would show them more honour and recompense them better than he. Adil begged them to remain, promising to honour them before others; but they were not to be mollified, for Swipdager was highly indignant at Adil's false behaviour in the battle. They therefore went in before Queen Yrsa thanking her for the great honours and kindness she had shewn them; after which they mounted their horses and rode to their father again. They then consulted him, and inquired of him to what

King they should address themselves. Then Swipur said, "that no King in the north could be compared with King Rolf in Denmark, Helge's and Queen Yrsa's son. He was mild and gentle towards the poor and oppressed, severe and terrible to his enemies; but towards his friends so faithful and generous, that he spared them neither gold or other treasures; for which reason the chief warriors in the north were found assembled round him, and all the neighbouring Kings were subject to him."

The brothers thought these good conditions, and went to King Rolf, among whose attendants they were admitted, and so they continued till the end of summer.

In the autumn King Rolf's Berserks returned, who according to their custom went round to every man in the whole hall, asking if any considered himself their equal; but all confessed them as their superiors. When they came to Swipdager and his brothers, these were in no wise inclined to humble themselves before the Berserks, and much tumult was about to arise in the hall in consequence, when King Rolf leapt up and separated them, and brought about a firm reconciliation between them, so that they afterwards kept him company in his Viking expeditions, and obtained constant victory wherever they went.

CHAPTER III.

OF BODWAR BJARKE.

IN the remote vallies of Norway lived at that period a tributary King named Ring. He had been a widower, but in his old age had married a woman from Finland, called Hvita, who was certainly beautiful, but full of

all manner of iniquity and malice, and had moreover a violent hatred for her step-son, the King's son Björn, (Bear.) At the time that this Saga was first written, the people still believed in witchcraft, and the inhabitants of Finland were considered to be particularly expert in it. It was therefore reported that Queen Hvita by her enchantments transformed the King's son into a bear. It was said that in the day-time he went into the fields and fed on the King's cattle; but every night he reassumed his human form, and wept and lamented over his unhappy situation. The Queen was urgent that this mischievous beast should be destroyed. A great hunt was commanded, and the bear was finally killed.

- Björn had a paramour called Berg, who became shortly after the mother of three sons, Elgfrode, Tore and Bodwar. These three shot up like grass and soon became taller and stronger than other men, so that it was no joke to sport with or to tease them; and it often happened, that when they were at play with the King's men, they handled them so roughly, that they were maimed and often wounded to death in consequence. This was especially the case with Elgfrode, for he was the strongest and the wildest. He therefore soon took leave of his mother, saying that he no longer chose to dwell with such weak and miserable men, and then set forth eastward towards Edaforest, through which the road passes between Norway and Sweden. He here settled himself in a cave, where he became a most cruel robber, attacking, plundering and killing all who journeyed by.

Shortly after, Tore also took leave of his mother and set out eastward. When he arrived at the mountains, he met with Elgfrode, who offered him the half of the

property he had acquired if he would remain with him ; but Tore refused and journied on further to Gothaland, where, for the sake of his royal appearance and great bravery, he was chosen King, and ruled the kingdom with might and glory.

Bodwar was both more beautiful in person, and gentler in character than his brothers, for which reason his mother loved him most. One day he questioned her about his descent, when she related everything about Hvita's witchcraft and wickedness, as also his father's death. Then was Bodwar wrath, and went up to his grandfather the old King Ring, informing him of what had been done to his son Björn. The King offered to pay a great fine for the Queen ; but Bodwar would take no money for his father's life, but took possession of Hvita. She was obliged to suffer the most cruel and ignominious death, and none either would, or dared undertake her defence. Shortly after King Ring died, and Bodwar was appointed King in his stead ; but he felt himself easy on his throne only a little while. He collected his people at a general Ting, and announced to them that he was about to leave the country ; but meanwhile he left the kingdom to his mother, whom he married to Ulfseiter Jarl. He first attended this marriage, and then set out eastward.

On this journey he came to Elgfrode's cave ; and there was no small joy between the brothers when they recognised each other. Elgfrode desired Bodwar to remain with him, offering him the half of his treasures ; but Bodwar said, " He did not think it was right to murder people for the sake of their possessions," and prepared to depart. When Elgfrode saw that he would not remain, he counselled him to travel to Rolf Krake in Denmark, and accompanied him on the way, in-

forming him how, "He had granted many an unarmed man his life." This pleased Bodwar, who begged him to let others also go in peace. •

As they were about to part, Elgfröde seized hold of Bodwar, and shook him, saying, "Thou art not yet so strong, brother, as thou needst to be." He therefore cut a hole in his leg, and gave Bodwar of the blood to drink. He then seized hold of him again; but Bodwar stood now so firm, that even Elgfröde had no power to move him from the place. Then Elgfröde said: "Thou hast now strength sufficient, and I think thou wilt be found to surpass all other men in courage and manliness." Then Elgfröde struck his own foot into the rock so hard that it left a deep mark, and spoke thus: "Every morning I shall visit this mark. If it is full of earth I shall know that you have died in your bed; if of water that you are drowned; but if there is blood in it, then you are slain with the sword, and I will seek to revenge your death, for I love you most of all my friends." Hereupon the brothers parted, Elgfröde reascended the mountains, but Bodwar continued his route southward.

In this manner he reached Gothaland, where his brother Tore was King, and Bodwar remained there awhile entertained with much hospitality and distinction. Tore likewise offered to share his possessions with him, if Bodwar would remain with him, or otherwise to give him armed men to accompany him on his journey; but Bodwar refused both offers, preferring to depend upon himself alone. When he had thus taken leave of his brother, he continued his journey still further to the south.

When Bodwar had at last come down to Denmark, not far from Lejre, it happened that he could find no night quarters, and was obliged to ride out in rain and

darkness, though his horse was perfectly knocked up. At last he hit against something nigh which impeded further progress. Bodwar alighted in order to find out what it was, and discovered a little house. He knocked, and was cordially received by an old man, who with his wife lived in the cottage. As Bodwar related his intention of travelling to King Rolf's court, the old man and his wife began to discourse upon the King's men and their sports. The old man told him, that at the entrance of the King's castle lay a large stone, which, whoever would be accepted into the King's service must show himself able to lift. There were also two large dogs, the one as strong as six, the other as ten men, and neither was he who could not measure himself with the smaller of these admitted amongst the proud warriors. As Bodwar and the old man were conversing, the poor old woman began to weep aloud. "Why weepest thou?" asked Bodwar. "Ah!" said she; "we had once a son called Hottur, who went to the King's court for pleasure; but the men at arms made joke of him, and sat him in a heap of bones in a corner of the hall, and it is now their amusement during meals to throw the bones they have picked upon him, which sometimes wound him sadly. I shall never get him back again, neither do I know if he is dead or alive. Now I ask nothing of thee for this thy night's lodging, but that thou wilt not cast the large, but only the little bones on our son, for thy hands seem so strong and so heavy, that he could scarcely bear a blow from them.' Bodwar promised this, and expressed his opinion that he did not think it very creditable to beat a man with bones, or to use rough play with children or weak people.

CHAPTER IV.

KING ROLF'S COURT.

THE following day Bodwar reached Lejre. He led his horse himself into the King's stable, without saying a word to any one, and then went up to the castle. Both the dogs came raging towards him; but he instantly lifted the large stone, and slew the one dog with it; after which, with this dog, he killed the other. He then entered the hall, when King Rolf reproached him with the murder of the dogs; but Bodwar made answer, that every free-born man had a right to defend his life as long as he could. The King praised his bravery, gave him the surname of Bjarke, and placed him in one of the chief places at his table. Now, when the men had drunk freely, they commenced, according to custom to pelt each other with the bones they had picked, which occasioned a great uproar through the hall. Bodwar now perceived a great heap of bones in one corner, and on advancing to it, discovered Hottur sitting, dirty, ragged, and trembling, within a high wall which he had cleverly contrived to build round him of the bones which had been thrown at him, to preserve himself by this means from being hit by others. Bodwar knocked down the wall, took Hottur by the arm and lifted him up from amidst the bones; at which he cried and exclaimed pitifully, believing that Bodwar meant to kill him. But Bodwar took him to his own place, and made him stand there behind him. As soon as the courtiers saw Hottur, they began to throw bones at him, so that they often struck Bodwar also; but of this he took not the slightest heed, but only held Hottur fast, who trembled and shook for

fear, and desired nothing so much as to run back and hide himself among his bones again. At last he observed one of these warriors sling a great knuckle-bone with all his might at Bodwar, and set up a cry of distress at the sight; but Bodwar caught the bone in his hand, and slung it back with so much strength, that the man fell down dead beneath the blow. At this, the rest leapt up to revenge their brother in arms; but the King forbade it, saying: "That Bodwar had only defended himself, and that this throwing of bones at innocent, unarmed people, was a bad custom of his warriors, and a mark of great contempt and disregard to the King; and that it was time it should now be given up." Bodwar after this rose yet higher in the King's estimation, so that he was considered the chief amongst the courtiers. Nevertheless, he never forgot Hottur; but having washed him clean, and given him fresh clothes, took him always with him wherever he went, and defended him from the jokes and mockeries of the rest.

CHAPTER V.

OF BODWAR BJARKE'S BRAVERY.

WHEN the time of Yule drew near, all the courtiers began to be silent and melancholy; and on inquiring the reason of this, Bodwar learnt that every Yule-Eve, a monstrous wild beast, or more probably a goblin, appeared at Lejre, and did much damage amongst the King's cattle, and whoever hitherto had ventured to go against it had fallen. It seemed to Bodwar this was a great disgrace to the King's warriors; but on Yule-Eve, King Rolf addressed his men, commanding them that

none should go against the monster; but, on the contrary, keep within and remain quiet that night; for he preferred that it should destroy all his cattle rather than that he should lose any more of his men.

About the middle of the night when all were sleeping, Bodwar arose silently, armed himself, went forth, taking Hottur with him, though he had no desire to accompany him. When they were at some distance from the castle, they perceived the monster coming raging against them. Hottur then began to cry out in great alarm that the wild beast would devour him. Bodwar commanded him to be silent, and threw him off his shoulders down in the moss, where he remained lying so possessed by fear, that he did not even dare to get up and run home. Bodwar advanced towards the animal; and it is shortly related, that by his great strength and sharp sword, he soon laid him dead on the ground. Bodwar then brought the trembling Hottur, and forced him, though with much trouble, to drink two long draughts of the animal's blood, and eat a piece of its heart. After this Bodwar took hold of him, shook him, and said: "Now, I doubt not but that you are strong enough no longer to fear the King's courtiers." "Neither them, nor even you yourself!" answered Hottur who was now quite valiant. They then returned to the castle. The following morning Bodwar wished to persuade the King that it was Hottur who had slain the beast, but every one still believed that it was Bodwar; they soon however perceived that Hottur had become quite another man, with whom it was no trifle to joke, for he was now found to be the strongest at Court next to Bodwar; nevertheless he never revenged himself on any of the courtiers for the mockery they had formerly shown

towards him. The King was therefore well-pleased with him; gave him the name of Hjalte, the Able, and as a proof of his favour, a very costly sword; and from that time forth was Hjalte held in much esteem amongst the courtiers, and became besides Bodwar Bjarke's most confidential friend; and thus this whole year passed away.

The following Yule, the King's Berserks came home from their long Viking expeditions, entered the hall clothed in steel from head to foot, marching round it, challenged any one to dare to compare himself with them. All bowed humbly before them declining an answer, and thus they passed along the benches till they came to Bodwar. He replied, "That not only was he as good, but much better than they;" started up, seized the chief amongst them and cast him with all his weapons so roughly on the floor, that his bones were almost broken. Hjalte sported in the same manner with another Berserk, and a great noise and disorder arose in the hall in consequence. King Rolf leapt from his throne, and entreated them to be still. "First," replied Bodwar, "the Berserk must confess that I am a better man than he." "That must be clear enough to all," answered the King, so Bodwar allowed the Berserk to rise, and the King besought them to prove their valour against his enemies, and not against each other. He reproached the Berserks for their arrogance, and told them that no one was so strong, but that he might meet a stronger still. A perfect reconciliation ensued, and the places were fixed as follows. At the King's right hand, and next to him sat Bodwar with Hjalte at his side; on the left, Swipdager sat next the King and his two brothers, and then the Berserks and the rest of the

courtiers on both sides ; and these places they kept the winter through.

During this time it happened that a very tall and mighty Berserk arrived from Blueland, as Africa was then called ; (and the negroes, Bluemen). He was called Sot, and brought with him many ships and a body of chosen troops. He went up into the King's hall with his men, and asked the King's sister Drifva to wife, or else challenged the King to single combat. This the King refused whereupon the giant mounted the steps of the throne, and struck at the King ; but Bodwar parried the blow with his good sword, which broke that of the giant in pieces. Bodwar then cleft his head and all the bluemen fled affrighted from the hall ; Bodwar, Hjalte, and the rest hastening after them, and hewing down all before them ; and finally clearing the ships where they found much gold and many treasures. After this stout action, Bodwar obtained the above mentioned Drifva from King Rolf to wife ; as they had always loved each other, their future life was one of the happiest.

But when King Rolf with these, his strong warriors, went on his Viking expeditions, he never met with opposition so stout but that he gained the victory in the end. All gave way before him. The neighbouring Kings became his vassals ; they feared his wrath but not his authority, for he was as mild and generous to his friends, as severe and terrible to his enemies ; and a great fame of him spread throughout the North.

CHAPTER VI.

THE VOYAGE TO UPSALA.

It happened once, that as King Rolf and Bodwar were conversing, Rolf asked if Bodwar knew any King who could be compared with him. Bodwar replied: "That he did not; but said one thing was wanting to Rolf's glory and that was that he should obtain his inheritance which King Adil unjustly retained." King Rolf replied, "That this would be hard for him to do; Adil being so powerful, and so well-versed in necromancy." "Nevertheless," said Bodwar, "does it not beseem you to venture to claim what is your own?" "In that thou speakest aright," said the King; "and besides the duty of revenging our father, King Helge's death lies on us, and that duty we shall now fulfil."

King Rolf then prepared himself with his twelve warriors, and a hundred choice men besides, the best of his court, and set out on the way to Sweden. One evening they came to a little farm where one peasant lived alone, who came out, and courteously invited them to lodge with him. King Rolf answered, "That he probably had not room and food for them all;" but the peasant smiled, and answered, "That he had sometimes seen many more people come to his village, and they should want for nothing." The peasant's name was Ilranc, and he was so wise that he could answer every question they put to him; and in addition he gave them better entertainment than they had ever met with before. But in the night they were awoken by such severe cold, that the teeth were chattering in their heads, and King Rolf with his twelve warriors alone could endure it; all the rest went about looking for more

clothes with which to cover themselves. In the morning the peasant asked how he had slept; and the King and Bodwar answered, "Well." "I know," said Hranc, "that your people found it rather cool in my cottage to-night; but greater difficulties are awaiting them at King Adil's court, and it would be better that you sent home the half of these weaker men, for there is no chance of your prevailing over King Adil by numbers." The King approved the peasant's advice, and therefore sending home the half of his people, continued his journey. When they had ridden the whole day, they came in the evening again, as it seemed, to the same farm, and the same peasant received them in the same style as before. They certainly thought that this looked strange; but passed the night with him notwithstanding. This night they were tormented by burning thirst; and as the King at the peasant's request, stopped a day longer to rest his horses, they were in the evening tried by very strong timber fires in the room, so that it became insupportably hot. As none but the King and his twelve champions could withstand these two further trials, the peasant Hranc advised Rolf to send back the rest of the people also to Denmark, and only take the warriors on the journey to Upsala with him. The King this second time followed the advice of his host, took a friendly leave of him, and rode with his chosen men further North into the Kingdom of Sweden.

CHAPTER VII.

KING ADIL'S STRATAGEMS.

WHEN they now approached King Adil's castle, all the inmates ascended to the towers to view the proud approach of the knights. These rode very slowly at first, but when they drew near the castle, they set spurs to their horses and started off towards the hall four abreast, so that every one was obliged to make way for them. They were then well received; but Bodwar called aloud to those who took their horses to tend them well, and take care that their manes and tails were neither dirtied nor allowed to get into disorder. When this was related to Adil, he said: "These men are very proud and high-spoken. Therefore take all their horses, cut off their tails, and the tufts on their foreheads with the skin. Let none be excepted, and soil their coats in the most ignominious manner." And this order was exactly executed.

Meanwhile the knights came to the hall-door, when Swipdager said: "I greatly suspect that treachery is at work against us here, therefore let me, who know everything here, advance first: neither let it be perceived which of us is King Rolf." And so they did; Swipdager going first; his brothers after him, then King Rolf, with Bodwar and the rest behind him. Swipdager then remarked that a number of traps with springs, and such like were set all along the hall; but he avoided them all, and they advanced until they saw King Adil, proud and vain-glorious, sitting on his throne. As soon as they had approached within speaking distance, Adil saluted Swipdager whom he recognized. Swipdager answered aloud, so that all could hear it, and asked

peace and security for himself and these twelve men, according to a promise which King Adil had formerly made. To this Adil agreed, and invited them to advance without fear into the hall; but they walked carefully, notwithstanding, being on their guard against treachery. When King Adil saw that they were not to be caught in this manner, he made a sign, at which a body of armed men rushed from under the hangings and attacked the strangers. These made a valiant resistance, cleft the traitors down to the teeth, and remained unharmed themselves. Adil sat swelling with rage upon his throne, looking at his men falling like dogs before him; nevertheless, when he saw that this trick had no success, he called to his men, and asked how they ventured to attack such heroes who had come there on a visit. He now commanded them to stop, that he might converse with his step-son Rolf. The courtiers made room, and the rest seated themselves; Swipdager first, then Hjalte, then Bodwar, next to him the King and the rest, keeping their weapons on.

Adil now desired the dead bodies to be carried out, and then commanded great fires of large timber to be lighted all along the floor of the hall, saying he intended by this to honour his guests; but he gave secret orders to his servants to make the fires insupportably strong, intending by this means to discover the King, for the others he thought would surely seek to protect him. They all remained sitting, however, without betraying Rolf in any manner; but when the fire came too near, Swipdager, Bodwar and Hjalte leapt up, and threw King Adil's servants into the fire, saying they would increase the warmth for King Adil. King Rolf had before made a vow never to fly from either fire or

sword; but when his clothes began to burn, and he remarked moreover how Adil and his people removed towards the hall-door, intending to leave him and the others to be burnt, he exclaimed: "He is not afraid of fire who leaps over it!" with which words he leapt over the raging fires, and was followed by the rest of his men. They now sought for King Adil to pay him back for his good entertainment; but he disappeared in a hollow pillar, and was lost in a secret underground path. When they could not find him, they broke out of the burning hall, and were but little pleased with Adil's entertainment.

When they had escaped, Queen Yrsa met them, and there was great joy between her and her son King Rolf. She led them to another lodging, where she had arranged everything in the best manner, as well as appointed a man named Woggur to wait upon them. When he came before the King, he said: "This is a strange man, with a face as long and as dry as a *Krake* stick;* can he be your King?" The King answered, "As you have given me a surname, what do you give me as a confirmation of the same?" "Nothing have I who am but a poor man," answered Woggur, "that I can give you." "Then," said the King, "who can give, ought to give," whereupon he gave a gold ring to the man.

As Woggur rejoiced greatly at this, the King said, "Woggur is pleased with little;" but the latter set up his one foot on the bench and said: "This promise I here make, King, to revenge thy death if I am then alive." "Thanks," said the King; "but others doubtless will not be wanting more fit for the purpose than you."

* *Krake*, a dry, rough, ugly fallen and half-rotten trunk of a tree.—AUTHOR.

However they soon found that Woggur was faithful to them, and warned them against King Adil's treachery. After which they all laid themselves down to sleep.

But when they had rested awhile, they began to perceive unfair play, for Adil with a great army had surrounded the house, and good counsel was considered of moment, that they might not be burnt to death. Bodwar proposed that they should all collect in one corner of the hall, and press with all their might against the beams of the walls; and such stout men were they, that the beams burst before their strength, and they escaped out of the flames. They then discovered every street and lane full of armed men who sought to lay hands on them; but it was impossible to resist the good weapons and stout blows of these warriors. They cut down the people before them like rotten straw, and all made way, or begged quarter.

Now Queen Yrsa advanced to meet King Rolf with a friendly salutation, saying that he had not been entertained as she could have wished. She begged him to stay no longer in Upsala, as King Adil was collecting great forces all over the kingdom. Before he set out she delivered to him, instead of his paternal inheritance, a large silver horn, in which all King Adil's precious rings and jewels were collected, the most remarkable of which, was a ring called *Swiagris*, the greatest treasure King Adil possessed. After this she had twelve red horses led out for the knights, and a white one for Rolf. These were the best of King Adil's stud, and they received them instead of their own which had been so ill-treated. King Rolf then took leave of his mother, gifted Woggur richly for his faithful service, and mounting his horse, rode with his warriors out of the town.

CHAPTER VIII.

KING ROLF'S RETURN HOME.

BEYOND Upsala extends a vast plain called Fyriswall, so called from the Fyris which flows through it. King Rolf and his company rode forth on this plain, but had not proceeded far, when they heard the sound of horns behind them. When they turned round they perceived a countless multitude of fighting men rushing out of the town in pursuit of them. When they began to draw near, King Rolf drew out the silver horn which he had received from Yrsa, and scattered the gold before them, so that the whole road glittered with it. So soon as the foremost of King Adil's people perceived all this gold, they hurried off their horses, and forgetting to pursue King Rolf, began each gathering to himself as much as he could manage. But when Adil saw this, he was highly indignant with his people, desired them to let the gold lie, and pursue the fugitives. He now rode foremost of his whole troop, and being very wrath, soon reached King Rolf. When the latter perceived King Adil at his side, he cast the precious ring Swiagris out on the road, which when Adil saw, he said: "Kinder has been to him than to me, she who gave King Rolf this ring," then bowed himself, and stretched forth the shaft of his lance at the same time towards the ground to recover the ring. Then said King Rolf: "Now I have made the richest man in Sweden bow his back;" and in the meanwhile he struck a blow at King Adil while he was thus stooping, and gave him an ignominious wound behind, saying: "Keep this shame scar for a time; and may you learn to know King Rolf whom you have so sought

for." The blood began to flow so copiously from Adil's wound that he was obliged to be led back by his men; but King Rolf again took up the ring Swiagris, whereupon he and his warriors faced about, and hewed down the nearest of the Swedes, so that the rest returned with King Adil to the town, and King Rolf and his men were free to pursue their way forward in peace.

They now came again to the farm of the peasant Hrane, who entertained them well as he had done before, and thought that his prophecy of their journey had been fulfilled, which they were also obliged to confess. Hrane produced some costly arms, sword, shield and coat of mail which he wished to present to the King; but he would in no wise accept them, thinking it not fit to beg armour from a peasant. At this Hrane was greatly angered, saying: "Thou art not always as wise and as prudent as thou thinkest thyself to be;" and the peasant was now so wroth, he would afford them no night's lodging, but they were obliged to ride on, though night had already closed in. When they had come to a little distance, Bodwar stopped and said: "Fools find good counsel too late. Methinks we have unwisely refused that which would have served us for future victory and success, for this peasant must certainly have been the ancient Odin, and was one-eyed as he." They therefore hastily turned about their horses' heads, but could find neither the peasant nor the farm again, but were obliged to continue their route to Denmark. But Bodwar advised King Rolf henceforward to remain quietly in his own kingdom and avoid war, for it was probable Odin would not in future grant him victory; neither was it to be expected that any one would venture to attack King Rolf and his men. And thus they did. The King

settled himself in peace and quiet, and no one ventured to molest him, for after his journey to Upsala his bravery became yet more renowned and famed throughout all countries, and the praise of himself and his warriors was heard in every man's mouth.

CHAPTER IX.

DEATH OF KING ROLF.

KING ROLF had a step-sister, named Skuld, who was thought by her mother's side to be of the race of the fairies, for she was full of witchcraft and wickedness. Her husband was Hjorward, a tributary of King Rolf; but Skuld was continually urging him to throw off this subjection, which Hjorward however never ventured to undertake. Skuld sent a message to her brother King Rolf, requesting him "not to exact the tribute from them for three years, for they would afterwards pay all at once." King Rolf who was very gracious agreed to this, and with that very money Skuld collected a great army, assembling the strongest and most venturous, as well as a number of her relations, the witches and fairies. All this she prepared so secretly, that King Rolf and his champions never heard the slightest rumour of it, till she, on the third Yule Eve, came to Lejre under pretence of paying the tribute, but having all this troop with her concealed.

King Rolf had prepared the most magnificent reception for his sister, and never suspected the least treachery, on which account there was much merry drinking that night in the hall before they parted. But when the night advanced, Hjalte remarked that treason was at work, as well as that the whole castle was surrounded by Skuld's men at arms; he therefore went into the hall, and shouted aloud, "Awake, Sir

King! now is the time for fighting instead of caressing women. Skuld does not look as if she wanted to increase your treasures, but rather as if she would take the kingdom from you, for she has a countless multitude without assembled against us." He then spoke to the warriors. "Let us now, brethren, perform our promise of manfully defending the mightiest King in the North; and it shall be written on each leaf, and heard in every country, how we return all the liberality, hospitality and favour, which we have experienced from him. I speak not from doubt, nor from fear, but it may be that King Rolf and his men drink now together for the last time. Up then, ye warriors all, and arm yourselves for fight!" They then all sprung up, seized their weapons, and made ready. But King Rolf said: "Bring forth the best liquor we have, for first we shall drink and rejoice, and then show what men Rolf's warriors are. All that I now desire is, that our bravery and our fame may be long remembered." And so they did, and when this was related to Queen Skuld without, she said: "Unlike all other men is my brother, King Rolf, and woe's me for his sake. But all things must have an end."

Having drunk a few moments together, King Rolf leapt up, and hurried out followed by his warriors, and the rest of his courtiers, and a close engagement took place. King Rolf kept up with his own banner, and so did his men, so that all were obliged to give way before them. The King swung his good sword, Skofnung, so that it sounded aloud on the helmets of his enemies, and at every blow a man was struck to the ground; and thus also did all his men. Queen Skuld's people, however, suffered the greatest injury from a tremendously large bear, which rushed forward in the fight on King

Rolf's traces. He scattered all of Skuld's troops whether man or horse, whom he advanced against, crushing them with his paws, or tearing them with his teeth, so that he alone overcame more of the King's enemies, than five of his warriors could; and every blow or arrow fell harmless upon him. Thus the battle raged awhile to Queen Skuld's discomfiture.

But Hjalte now looked around, and missing Bodwar, exclaimed: "Where may Bodwar be hiding, whom we have accounted so great a warrior?" But King Rolf answered, "If he is his own master, depend upon it he is where his presence serves us best. Therefore go thou on with the fight as thou hast commenced, and accuse not Bodwar!" However, not the less did Hjalte run home, seeking Bodwar, and found him sitting alone and inactive in the great hall of the castle. Hjalte began to reproach Bodwar in hard and violent terms, threatening at last to burn both him and the hall, if he would not follow him out to the battle. Then Bodwar sighed heavily, raised himself and said: "You have no need to threaten me, for I am in no wise afraid, and believe that in this thou hast not rendered King Rolf the great service thou mayest think, for now less than before shall I be able to give him my aid; but now I see that no council can stand against what fate determines," and with these words they went out to the fight.

Just as Bodwar came forth, the great bear disappeared from the fight, and the tide turned against King Rolf's men. Queen Skuld, as long as the bear was in the field, had been unable to avail herself of her enchantments, but she now mounted her witch-chair in a black tent, and commenced her invocations, after which all sorts of strange things appeared in the fight. It is particularly related, that a hog appeared of a grey colour like a

wolf, but as big as an ox. Arrows flew out of every one of his bristles which struck King Rolf's men to the ground, but he could himself be wounded by none. The warriors, meanwhile, behaved themselves bravely, particularly Bodwar. He brandished his sword with both hands, and struck around him till great heaps of slain lay on every side. Blood ran down his sword to his hands, so that he was red even to the shoulders, and seemed beside himself with fury. Nevertheless, the Saga relates, that the extraordinary circumstance was here remarked, that as soon as her men were hewn down, Queen Skuld woke them up again, which made her troops hard to fight with. In this manner the battle continued till a little after midnight, and then all King Rolf's men, except his warriors, had fallen. But even these were sorely wounded. Each was parted from the other in the crowd and the darkness, and thus King Rolf was shut up in a circle of Queen Skuld's men. He fought his way through it is true, but was almost exhausted with fatigue. And now it came to pass that the warriors themselves began to fall the one after the other, scarcely being able to keep their feet for weariness, nor for loss of blood to defend themselves against superior numbers. They had lived with their King, and with him they now all died, leaving behind them the greatest renown for valour and fidelity.

Queen Skuld had now gained the victory she desired; but her husband King Hjordward had fallen, and few remained of all her troops. She took her brother's kingdoms, but governed them ill, and only for a short time. Elgfröde examined the mark on the rock every morning, and the day he found it full of blood, he hastened south to King Tore in Gothaland. They equipped an army to avenge their brother's death, and for the same purpose they also collected people from

Queen Yrsa in Upsala ; and it is said, that the before-mentioned Woggur was the leader of these auxiliaries, and thus he kept his promise to King Rolf even though it had been contemned. They then united their forces, and marched against Skuld, whom they took by surprise, as she had done King Rolf. She was soon taken prisoner and tortured to death with the most dreadful pains, which was the reward of her wickedness and fratricide. Adil lived yet awhile in Upsala, hated by Queen Yrsa, and despised by his people for his treachery, and the shame King Rolf had put upon him. His death occurred at last in this manner. While at a great sacrifice, he was riding round the Disar-Hall in Upsala, his horse stumbled so that Adil fell and crushed his head against a stone ; and both his death and his memory were considered very contemptible.

But the Saga, or story of King Rolf and his warriors, has gone from mouth to mouth over the whole of the North. The fair maidens drunk to their young heroes with King Rolf's health, encouraging them thus to brave deeds of arms. A great mount was raised to his memory, and his good sword, Skofnung, was preserved for very long, as a great treasure in far off Iceland, among the proud race who dwelt there. It also was finally lost or destroyed, and its hard steel therefore lasted not so long as the remembrance of King Rolf ; but it has happened as it is to be read in a verse of the old Havamal :

Thy her-ls die away,
Thy friends die away,
And thou diest thyself also.
But the Fame never
Shall die of those
Who have gained a good report.

BOOK IV.

OF KING ROLF GÖTRIKSSON.

CHAPTER I.

KING GÖTE'S HUNT.

GÖTE was the name of a King who in remote times reigned over West Gothland, and was said to be a descendant of Odin himself. At this period, the country was thinly peopled, and the ground was chiefly occupied by huge forests which no one could penetrate. It then often happened that men who had been outlawed, or for some other reason could no longer enjoy life among their fellows, removed with all their possessions into the heart of such wildernesses, clearing the forest and cultivating small farms, where they and their descendants sometimes lived many consecutive years without seeing any other human faces.

King Göte used often to take the pleasure of hunting, which was his greatest delight. It happened once on a time, that as he was following a beautiful deer, he was so eager in the pursuit that he far outstripped his company. The deer ran into the wilderness, the King following, and thus the day passed. Towards evening he had become so deeply entangled in the forest, that he could not find his way back again; his feet were likewise torn by thorns and gravel, as he had thrown off a part of his clothes to be lighter in the pursuit. He therefore stopped and listened awhile; he thought he

heard a dog bark, and followed the sound expecting to find people, in which he was not disappointed, for he soon discovered a small house and a serf standing before the door with an axe in his hand. When this man perceived that the King turned that way, he ran and killed the dog, saying: "Thou shalt not again shew strangers here, for this tall man will doubtless eat up all the meat the master has." The King from this thought that he had no great hospitality to expect. The serf tried to hinder the King from entering, but was made to feel his strength, for the King pulled him out of the doorway and entered. There then sate the master himself, who for his extreme miserliness was called Skapnartunger, and his wife with three sons and three daughters. No one bade the King welcome, or even saluted him; he advanced unbidden and seated himself, but not a word was spoken. When the evening meal was carried in, none bade the King eat; but he boldly stepped up to the table, and began to appease his great hunger. When the peasant remarked how much the King consumed, he ceased eating himself and pressed his hat over his eyes, for he could not endure to behold the great waste of food which the King caused him. The King rested there over the night, but in the morning when he was to return home, asked the peasant for a pair of shoes, which Skapnartunger gave him, though unwillingly, first drawing out the shoe-ties that he might not give away too much. The King then set out, seeking his way homewards, and at last rejoined his people.

But Skapnartunger thought that his life was good for nothing after the great loss King GÖTE had caused him, and determined with his wife and his slave to ascend their Åttestupa (see Book I, Chap. III.) and so go to Odin. Close by this farm there was a very

high perpendicular rock, such that it was certain whoever should cast himself from the top would never reach the bottom alive. Here Skapnartunger's ancestors had always put an end to their own lives, as soon as they became very old, that their children might be saved from maintaining them, and they themselves come to Odin and be freed from the pains and sufferings which accompany old age and a straw-death. Skapnartunger therefore with his family ascended the Åttestupa, and having exhorted his children to economy and bid them farewell, he threw his wife, his servant, and himself down from the rock, and thus boldly and joyfully they went to Odin. Their children resembled them. As soon as they suffered the least loss, they became discomfited and weary of life, which they brought to a term at their Åttestupa. Thus they all died with the exception of one, called Snotra. She was both more beautiful and more courteous than the others; and when they had all destroyed themselves, she wandered out of this wilderness, and sought out King Göte, with whom she ever after remained, and became the mother of a boy, called Götrik, who grew up very fast, and became both stout and strong.

CHAPTER II.

OF KING GÖTRIK.

THERE is nothing more to say of King Göte, of whom tradition only further relates, that when he died, his son Götrik was unanimously taken as King of West Gothland, and as he was both mild and brave, he became a much honoured and admired leader. He had a Queen, whom he loved dearly; but she fell very sick, and

finally she died, leaving no sons behind her. King Götrik was so overcome by grief and distress at her loss, that he cared for nothing more, but sat continually on her mound; and thus several years passed away. The kingdom began to feel the want of the King's care, and things were going very far wrong, when his friends came to him, and prayed him to marry again, saying they would prefer being governed by sons of his race. Götrik listened to their advice, and finally determined to follow it. He therefore prepared himself and eighty well-armed men, and rode westward to Tore, a chief in Norway whom he had heard had a daughter called Ingeborg, both fair and wise, so that one might travel far before one could hope to meet her equal.

When King Götrik arrived, he was well-received; but another lover was there before him, viz. King Olof, who was both young, handsome, and courteous in all things; King Götrik on the other hand, was already somewhat advanced in years. He notwithstanding declared his purpose to Tore, who referred the choice and answer entirely to his daughter. All were therefore assembled, and the damsel was to give her reply. She spoke thus: "I liken these two Kings to two apple trees. The one is young, but likely to bear much and good fruit, when it comes to age and ripeness—this tree is King Olof. The other tree stands already full-sized and glorious, with leafy branches and all manner of fruit—this tree signifies King Götrik and his kingdoms, power, great honour and renown. If on account of his age he should not live very long, I should think that he will leave such sons behind him as one can fully depend upon; and I therefore choose to prefer King Götrik's love and favour."

At these words of the maiden, King Götrik over-

joyed, sprung up like a youth, took her by the hand, and betrothed her with a ring in King Olof's presence. He, highly indignant, burst out into threats against King Götrik, who paid but slight attention to them, and he then hurried away from the place where he had met with such an ignominious dismissal.

After some days, Götrik commenced his homeward journey with his betrothed, for he chose that their marriage should be celebrated in West Gothland. As on his way, they were advancing through a forest, the before-mentioned King Olof with his men, met them, and a sharp combat ensued. Olof called to Götrik to give up the maiden and the whole of her dower as a ransom for his life, for "it suited not that such an old man should have so young and fair a maid." Götrik answered: "Although you have so many more followers than I, you shall perceive that the old man is not afraid;" whercon he advanced with great courage and heavy blows, so that King Olof's men began to fall, and he himself at last fell dead to the ground. King Götrik then pursued his way homewards, where he celebrated a magnificent bridal, and gained much renown for his valour in this expedition.

CHAPTER III.

KING ROLF GÖTRIKSSON.

KING Götrik and Ingeborg agreed well together, and their intercourse was of the kindest. They had two sons, very unlike each other. The eldest, Kettil, was very little, though strong and supple; but moreover rash, forward and talkative. Rolf, the younger, was on the contrary tall and strong, and beautiful to look on;

in other respects silent and thoughtful in his enterprises, but true to his word and persevering; and so he was much beloved by his parents and all others.

At this time there reigned a King in Denmark of the name of Ring, who from his youth had been a companion of King Götrik, between whom and himself the greatest friendship as foster-brothers existed. Rolf Götriksson was educated at the Court of King Ring together with Ingiald, son of the latter, and the boys had entered into a contract of foster-brotherhood together; Rolf was however the first in all things, and became both much taller and stronger than any other man in the North at that time. Kettil grew up at home with his father, who however did not love him much; neither was he loved by others on account of his pride and obstinacy. When King Götrik was very old, he became ill, and thought he understood that this would be his death. He therefore called Ingeborg, Kettil and his chiefs to his side, thanking them first heartily for the help and assistance they had given him, and then counselling them, though Kettil was the eldest, and had the better right to the throne, to take Rolf, as in every way more capable and fit, to be their leader. This pleased them well, and gained the assent of all, even that of Kettil. King Götrik died shortly after, and Rolf was sent for from Denmark, taken for King of the whole country, and ruled it with prudence and courage.

CHAPTER IV.

OF TORBORG.

AT that time a King called Erik reigned in Upsala ; some say that he was a tributary in Yngwar Harras' time, others that he was that King Erik who was son of Agne Skeppsbo, and brother and co-regent with Alrik. This same King Erik had no son, but only one daughter named Torborg. She was more beautiful and wise than most other women. She was clever in all woman's work, as it was fitting she should be, but still more so in what befits a knight, namely in riding, fighting with sword and shield, and many other exploits of that kind which were her chief pleasure and delight. King Erik little liked his daughter having such masculine tastes, and begged her to sit still in her maiden chamber as other Kings' daughters used to do ; but she told him, she had good need of these accomplishments, for when she should inherit the kingdom from her father, it would require her best ability to defend it against foreign enemies. She therefore begged her father to give her at that time some province to govern, that she might accustom herself while he yet lived to rule both land and people. King Erik gave her in consequence, a third of his kingdom, as well as an estate royal called Ulleråker in Upland, and also many a stout and bold man to be her champions. Torborg then set out for Ulleråker, and held her Court there with much might and wisdom ; but she never could endure to hear that she was a woman, dressing herself in men's clothes, and ordering her men to call her King Torborg. Those who came here to court her were driven away with laughter and mockery, or if these did not suffice, with lance and spear.

CHAPTER V.

KING ROLF GÖTRIKSSON'S COURTSHIP.

ROLF GÖTRIKSSON ruled his kingdom meanwhile with much renown; the summers he passed in arms with his adopted brother Ingiald, gaining fame and riches; and during the winter he sat at home in his kingdom.

Once when King Rolf and his brother Kettil were speaking together, Kettil said, that much was wanting to Rolf's glory and consideration, till he had a good and courteous Queen. Rolf then asked what project Kettil had for him on this score, and Kettil then begged him to sue for Torborg, saying it would be the greatest marriage in the North to get the Upsala King's daughter. But King Rolf expected only a contemptuous refusal, and did not think he possessed power sufficient to carry through the undertaking by force. He therefore continued his former manner of life some years, ever increasing his riches and his renown. Some winters after this, Kettil and Rolf again began to talk on the same subject, but King Rolf refused continually, as he had heard meanwhile how Torborg had treated her other lovers, putting out the eyes of some, cutting off the hands and feet, or in other ways maiming others; so that all had been obliged to withdraw with slighting words and contempt. "Many a one has little courage in a large body," said Kettil, "and it is a shame that thou who art a man, shouldst not dare to speak with a womankind." This angered King Rolf, and he determined to set out, but first sent a message to Denmark for Ingiald, his foster-brother, who came immediately. They then set out together with sixty well-armed men

on their journey to Upsala, intending a peaceful beginning to their undertaking. Kettil was meanwhile obliged to sit at home and govern the kingdom, which he did very unwillingly, rather desiring to take part in this adventure.

One night, Ingerd, King Erik's Queen awoke, and related to her husband a wonderful dream she had had. She thought that she saw a troop of wolves come running from Gothaland towards Sweden, a great lion and a little bear leading them; but they were smooth-haired, gentle, and tame. "What thinkest thou, Queen, that it means?" said the King. "The lion," said she, "must be the ghost of a King, but the white bear marks some King's son, and the wolves their attendants; and I guess that it is King Rolf Götriksson and his foster-brother Ingiald of Denmark, and their errand must be peaceful since they appeared so tame. Thinkest thou not, that King Rolf is come to court our daughter, Torborg?" But King Erik would not even hear of such a thing, as that the King of so small a kingdom should venture to court his daughter.

Some days after, Erik heard of King Rolf's arrival, and sent to invite him to sup with him; but when Rolf came, Erik showed him no particular place of honour, so that he sat very silent and dissatisfied at the feast. Erik asked him finally for what purpose he had come north from Gothaland. King Rolf answered this, and courteously set forth his errand, but King Erik said: "I know the joking ways of the Goths well, and how they often say that which has no meaning; but I can guess your errand. I know that Gothaland is little, and your revenues small, and that you have many people whom you supply in your generosity as long as you have anything to give. It is a dear time in Gotha-



land, and you are in want of food, which has brought you to visit us here, that you may retain your plumpness, and not be forced to suffer hunger. And it was a very good thought of you to seek help with us; for we will permit you with all your men, to go as guests round about our kingdom for a whole month; and then I know you will return home unfamished."

King Rolf did not answer much to this speech; but it was easy for every one to discover how angry he became, and thus the Kings parted this evening. In the night, King Erik related his conversation to Queen Ingerd, who thought it very badly addressed, because what Rolf might want in the size of his kingdom, he made up for by his bravery; and was, therefore, as powerful a King as one who had a wider rule. Erik granted this; and so it was determined, that the next day Erik should recall his words, laying the blame of them upon the ale, and so seek a reconciliation with Rolf. This was done, and Erik gave his consent to the courtship provided only he could win Torborg's consent, promising at the same time not to interfere in the matters between them.

King Rolf and his company now proceeded to Ulle-råker, and arrived when the whole Court was collected in the hall. He chose twelve of the stoutest of his men, who with Rolf first, and Ingiald next were to enter fully armed with their drawn swords in their hands; but if they were attacked, those who came in last were to go out first, and so in succession; and they were not to allow anything to alarm them, but to conduct themselves like men. The rest of the troop were meanwhile to hold the horses without. When King Rolf thus entered the hall, they all marvelled greatly at his great height and noble appearance. Rolf

saw how on the High-Seat sat a tall man in royal robes, being at the same time very beautiful and finely formed ; and rightly judging that this was Torborg, he took off his helmet, stepped before her, and bowing, commenced to deliver his message. However, scarce did she understand what Rolf's speech aimed at, than she interrupted him, saying, he was surely joking ; for their real errand was to get food, which she would not deny them ; but referred them to the chief of the kitchen. But when King Rolf still continued his courtship, and spoke as she was a woman, of their marriage, she became so angry and enraged, that she scarcely knew what she did. She darted up, seizing her weapons and calling on her men to lay hold upon and bind that fool who so dared to affront King Torborg ; on which followed much shouting and confusion in the hall. King Rolf put on his helmet, and ordered his men to retire, which they did in spite of the hard attack of Torborg's men. King Rolf went backwards through the whole hall ; with his shield in one hand, he parried all blows, and he swung his sword in the other to such purpose that twelve of the courtiers fell before him ere he got out of the hall. As he saw however that their numbers were too strong for him, he ordered his men to ride out with all haste, and so avoid the pursuers, whose horses were at that time not at hand.

When they returned home to West Gothland, and Kettil was informed of the ill-success of their expedition, he said : " It is a great shame to suffer such an affront from the hand of a woman, and be driven like a horse out of a pasture : and I vote for speedily revenging such an insult." Rolf said he would not do it yet, however much Kettil might urge him.

But when Torborg was told that it was King Rolf

of West Gothland who had courted her, she understood very well, that he did not intend to let the matter rest here, and that she must be prepared for much harder attacks from him. She therefore caused a great body of men to be collected, and raised a wall or rampart round Ulleråker, whose match in strength and workmanship was not to be found; for it was very high and so strong that battering-rams had no power on it; and water-cisterns were besides built into it, which would put out the fire if any sought to kindle it. After Torborg, in this fashion, had fortified herself in Ulleråker, she sate herself down, and made herself merry with her Court, thinking she had no reason to fear being troubled by any more lovers in the whole world.

CHAPTER VI.

ROLF GÖTRIKSSON'S MARRIAGE.

THE following summer Rolf Götriksson was on an expedition in the West Sea, and met with Asmund, the son of the King of Scotland. The battle was severe, for Asmund was a perfect warrior; but in the end they made a reconciliation, and entered into foster-brotherhood together, and made all their expeditions that summer in common, gaining continual victories; in the winter, Asmund accompanied Rolf to West Gothland. The following spring King Rolf armed six ships, equipping them with the choicest troops, and this time took both Kettil and Asmund with Ingiald and himself. He then commenced his voyage to Sweden, not stopping before he reached Upsala.

At this time, Queen Ingerd had another dream, precisely like the former, with only this difference,

that there were two white bears this time, and a hog which was certainly of no great size, but very angry and spiteful so that he looked as if he would bite everything he could get at, every bristle on his back pointed forward, and all the animals this time looked angry and irritated. The Queen thought that the vision signified King Rolf Götriksson, who was probably coming to avenge the affront which he had suffered; but the angry hog she thought must be Kettil's familiar, for it best suited the account she had heard related of his disposition. Presently after Rolf arrived with all his people and was well-received by King Erik, and the former convention was renewed between them, viz.: that the two Kings should remain in peace and friendship, even if the courtship should proceed somewhat by storm. After this King Rolf set out for Ulleråker, and asked to speak with Torborg, who presented herself on the wall with her people. King Rolf then proposed to her as conditions, either to accept his proposals, or that he would burn up the town and slay every man within the walls. "Thou shalt first be a goatherd in West Gothland," said Torborg, "before thou shalt get any power over us." On this she and all her men struck their shields, and would listen to no more.

Rolf was therefore forced to attack the town by storm, but met with the stoutest resistance. In every advance the Goths made they were repulsed by the Swedes. These poured boiling water and pitch over them, threw beams and stones upon their heads, and a fresh supply of troops always manned the walls. When fourteen days had passed in this fashion without the Goths having made any progress, they began to complain and rather desired to return home again than to endure the mockings to which they were exposed,

for the townspeople went out on the ramparts and showed them all sorts of costly things, inviting them to come and take them, using besides opprobrious terms and ridicule more than they could bear. ●

All this went to King Rolf's heart, and he was obliged to seek counsel in his misfortune. He at last ordered his men to bind together boards and branches of trees interwoven with brushwood so as to make a strong roof which he supported by stout beams, and advanced the whole under the wall, where he made his people expeditiously dig through the rampart. The Swedes cast down stones, beams, and boiling-water upon them; but the good roof received it all without permitting it to injure them. When the Goths at last got into the citadel, they found nobody there, but every room was full of delicately prepared viands, and all sorts of precious articles. Kettil wanted to stop, divide the prey, and commence a merry life; but Rolf forbid this, saying they should first seek out where Torborg had hidden herself. As they were now ransacking every room, they found a secret underground passage which they followed, the King leading the way, and the rest following in succession. It finally led them out into a forest in which they found Torborg and all her men, and a sharp battle began between them. Torborg fought like the bravest warrior, and her men conducted themselves also manfully, though the tide was turning against her, because no one could resist Rolf and his foster-brothers.

Rolf now called to Kettil and bade him take Torborg prisoner; but not to wound her, as it would be shameful to use arms against a woman. Kettil was now so near her, that he gave her a blow with the flat of his sword along the thigh, dropping at the same time some

rude and contemptuous words ; but Torborg gave him with her battle-axe so hard a blow on the ear, that Kettil fell with his heels in the air, and she called to him, " Thus we punish our dogs when they bark too loud." Kettil leapt to his feet again wanting to revenge himself, but in the same moment Rolf came up, grasped Torborg across the arms, and so she was obliged to surrender herself to his power ; but Rolf only desired that she would permit her father to be judge in this matter. She therefore accompanied him back to Upsala, and laid down her arms at King Erik's feet, who was greatly delighted at this change. Shortly after her marriage with King Rolf was celebrated, and held in the most honourable manner, so that every man was invited to it, and the festivities lasted fourteen days, after which they all parted, and every one returned home to his own place. King Rolf and Queen Torborg lived long and happily together.

Many narrations are still to be found of the voyages and wars which these foster-brothers made together ; but these are filled with stories of enchantments and untruths like the greater number of histories of that time ; and as the most part of these are only fables and falsehood, and we elsewhere in this work have given some examples of such tales, we do not think it requisite to repeat more of the same kind, but finish here the Saga of Rolf Götriksson.

BOOK V.
OF INGIALD ILLRATA.

CHAPTER I.

KING BRÖT-ANUND.

THE twenty-third King of the Yngling race was called Anund. He was much loved, had many friends, and during his reign there was peace and good harvests throughout the kingdom. There was at that time in Sweden many uninhabited districts, several days' journey in extent, and King Anund laid much stress on cultivating the good ground which was found in the forests. He afterwards caused the superfluous population to remove there, and thus wide districts were peopled. He also caused estates to be cultivated for himself in every large district in Sweden, and thus increased the domains of the ancient Kings which was known by the name of Upsala-Öde. Besides this, he caused many roads both over mountains and morasses to be made, by which means he visited the different parts of his kingdom. As he in this manner cultivated and broke up the land, he was surnamed Bröt-Anund, that is Anund, the cultivator.

CHAPTER II.

INGIALD ILLRÄDA'S BEGINNING.

THE Swedes were once collected in great numbers in Upsala to celebrate the great Midwinter sacrifice. Ingiald, King Bröt-Anund's son was also there, as well as Alf the son of a tributary King; the boys were both about six years old, and then began to play a game, each commanding his own troop, and then attacking each other; but in this it was seen that Alf was stronger than Ingiald, who was so much vexed at it that he began to cry. When Ingiald's foster-father heard this, he said that it was a great shame for Ingiald. The next day he roasted the heart of a wolf which he made Ingiald eat, and it is said that he afterwards became more cunning and cruel than other men. When King Bröt-Anund was once travelling between his own estates, he came to Himmelshed in Nerike, passing through a narrow and deep valley with steep and very high rocks on both sides, on which much snow was lying. A violent rain came on, which loosened a part of the rock, which with much snow, earth, and stones rushed down, so that King Anund and many of his people met their death in its fall.

CHAPTER III.

INGIALD'S TREACHERY.

INGIALD now became King in Upsala. The custom in the land at that time was that, at the funeral feast of Kings and Jarls, their successors were to sit on a foot-stool before the Throne or High Seat. Then the

Brage-beaker was carried in, on which the heir stood up, made a vow to perform some great feat of arms, and afterwards drained the cup to the bottom, whereupon he was first led to the throne and lawfully proclaimed King. When the kingdom of Sweden, after the death of Agne Skeppsbo, began to go to two brothers, many royal families arose which ruled over tribes' and in different districts. These Kings of tribes, though they acknowledged the Upsala King as their superior, still much diminished his taxes and his power. Ingiald, for his father's funeral, built a large hall in Upsala with seven seats of honour. He afterwards invited all the neighbouring minor Kings and Jarls throughout the kingdom, and those who came were led into the new hall. In the evening, the horn of a great animal like the Brage-beaker was borne in; Ingiald then stood up, and made a vow to increase his kingdom by half on every side, or to lose his life in the attempt. He afterwards emptied the horn. But at night when the guests were intoxicated, Ingiald commanded his people who were in the old hall to arm themselves and surround the new hall, to which they set fire. When the hall began to burn, those who were within sought to escape; but were immediately killed by Ingiald's men. In this manner, six of these petty Princes with their men were burnt to death. Ingiald subdued their countries, and laid them under contribution; but for this treacherous and evil expedient, he was hated by the people, and called Ingiald Illræda, or Illrule.

CHAPTER IV.

INGIALD ILLRÅDA AND KING GRANMAR.

GRANMAR, the petty King of Södermanland, had not been at the funeral in Upsala, but rightly judged that the same fate was intended for him as the other Kings had met with ; and King Ingiald on his side collected a great army from all parts of the kingdom, with which to attack King Granmar that same autumn. But the latter had got help from Högne the petty King of East Gothland, and was not unprepared. A great battle ensued, in which Ingiald had the superior numbers ; but after it had lasted awhile, the chiefs and troops of those districts which had been gained by treachery fled, so that Ingiald was left in his need, and hard pushed. He lost his foster-father and two foster-brothers ; and sorely wounded himself was obliged to fly to his ships. He then saw that he could not trust much to the fidelity of his people, and therefore made peace and reconciliation with Granmar who attended the great summer-sacrifice in Upsala. The following autumn, Granmar being at one of his castles on Sel Island in Lake Mälär, Ingiald stole upon it one night with his troops, surrounded the house, and set it on fire. Thus King Granmar, his son-in-law, and many of their people were burnt to death, and King Ingiald brought Södermanland into subjection to himself. It is said that Ingiald, by treacherous means, destroyed twelve tributary Kings, and thus became sole ruler in all Sweden, save East Gothland where Högne constantly defended himself.

At this time every province had its own law, but King Ingiald desired one law for the whole kingdom.

He therefore sent Wiger Spa or the Wise, Lagman or Judge of the Tiunda district in Upland, to collect all the separate laws from which to make a general code. The collections he thus made were called Wiger's Sections, as they were cut on thin sheaves of wood, of which one section answered to, and represented a volume.

CHAPTER V.

IWAR WIDFAMNE'S ORIGIN.

KING Ingiald's daughter Åsa was married to King Gudröd. He had a brother, Haldan, who for his bravery was called Haldan the Fleet or the Brave. Those brothers were joint Kings in Scåne, and descended from the Sköldungar dynasty. Haldan's son was called Iwar, and was considered stupid and useless in his youth; but when one of the men once gave him a box on the ear, Iwar immediately killed him with a stick he had in his hand, and afterwards became a great warrior. At that time, there was a Princess called Gyrita, in Jutland, renowned both for her beauty and riches. She alone survived of the royal race in that country, and thought she could never get a husband of equal birth, for which reason she kept twelve warriors to watch her bower, and drive all lovers away. These twelve were brothers of him whom Iwar killed in his youth. Iwar went there and arrived at the maiden's tower during the absence of her champions. He courted the Princess; but she refused him, upbraiding him with his low birth, and his face disfigured by scars. But Iwar answered that he would make up for these two defects by deeds of valour, and implored Gyrita not to marry

before he returned, or was dead. On his way thence, Iwar soon heard the noise of Gyrita's champions, who on their return rode after him, to revenge their brother's death. Iwar begged his followers to hide themselves; but when they refused it unless he would do the same, he forced them, saying, that "Gyrita should never hear that he through fear had avoided a combat." He then hewed a great oaken club, with which he dealt such heavy blows to the advancing warriors, that he finally felled the whole twelve to the ground. As a reward for this brave action, he got the good sword Ljusinge from his mother, which she had hidden in the ground ever since her father's death.

After this, Iwar set out to assist the Russians in a war against King Ingiald in Sweden. There was a famous warrior named Hildiger in the Swedish army, who had called out and slain many of the best Russian warriors, and him Iwar challenged immediately to single fight; but he refused, saying, that Iwar was too inexperienced and insignificant a man to fight against, and advised him instead to address himself to others less renowned. Then Iwar called out another whom he immediately vanquished; the next day, two at one time, the following day three, and so on, till he at last killed eleven at a time. Now he was greatly renowned, so that the Swedes themselves recognised his bravery, saying that Hildiger had not ventured to go against Iwar through cowardice. This was too much for Hildiger, who then accepted Iwar's challenge. It was commonly reported amongst the people, that Hildiger by songs and enchantments had the power of blunting his enemies' swords, therefore Iwar bound a piece of cloth round his sword Ljusinge, and thus believing he had found a counter-charm advanced against Hildiger.

It was not long before Hildiger felt himself wounded to death. He then threw away his arms, and related that he was Iwar's half-brother, which was the reason he had refused to fight with him. He had passed all his life in arms, and now left his shield to Iwar, on which all his (Hildiger's) exploits were engraved; amongst others was to be seen in the centre how he had murdered his own son. "But," said Hildiger, "nothing can alter the determinations of fate, whether for joy or sorrow," upon which he died.

When the report spread in Denmark that Iwar had fallen in the combat with Hildiger, Sivard, a great man from Saxony proposed for Gyrita, and as her counsellors were bribed, they persuaded her to marry Sivard. This was told to Iwar in Russia, who therefore set out with despatch for Denmark, and arrived on the very bridal day. He ordered his men to hide themselves outside, and not to enter the hall till they heard the clash of arms. He then presented himself in disguise before the bride, reproaching her in mysterious terms and verses for her breach of faith. She understood who he was, and answered in the same manner, that she had believed him dead, and had not been able to withstand her counsellors, but that she had always loved him most. When he heard this, he pierced Sivard through with his sword, and with the assistance of his men cut down all the Saxons. After this he married Gyrita, and ruled her kingdoms.

CHAPTER VI.

KING INGIALD ILLRÄDA'S DEATH. A.D. 600.

ÅSA, King Gudröd's Queen, was like her father in temper and disposition. She first persuaded Gudröd to murder his brother Halfdan Snälle, and then she made away with Gudröd himself, that she might remain alone. But fearing revenge, she was obliged to flee back to her father, and for this ill-deed received the same surname as himself; being called Åsa Illräda. When Iwar heard of his father's death, he collected a great army, and past from Scåne up through Sweden, to seek revenge on Åsa and Ingiald. These were at the royal estate Ränninge on Fögd Island in the Lake Mälär, when they heard of Iwar's expedition. Ingiald soon perceived that he had no forces to bring against him, for the people were untrue to his interests, neither had he any place of refuge where he might be free from the fear of being attacked by any of his numerous enemies. He and his daughter, therefore, in their desperation took the determination, that when they had intoxicated their whole court, they should fire the castle, and destroy all in it, themselves included, at the same time. This happened about 600 years after Christ. Such was the end of King Ingiald Illräda, who was the last King of the Ynglinga dynasty in Sweden. His son Olof fled to Wermeland, and laying open the forests was called Trätelja or Woodcutter. His descendants were Kings in Norway, and many mighty families, and memorable men trace their descents from him.

BOOK VI.

IWAR WIDFAMNE AND HIS DESCENDANTS.

CHAPTER I.

KING IWAR'S MIGHT.

IWAR now became King in Upsala, and founder of a new dynasty called the Iwarska. In the first year of their marriage, Gyrita gave him no children; but he went to Upsala and received from the Gods the answer that when he had appeased the ghost of his murdered brother, his desire should be granted. The oracle proved true, and Gyrita bore him a daughter called Öda, or the Rich. King Iwar ruled with a strong hand, and entirely subdued the minor Kings who had escaped King Ingiald. He reigned alone over all Sweden; he had acquired Jutland with his Queen; conquered a part of Saxony by the sword, the whole of the Prussian coast on the Baltic, and a fifth part of England. On account of this extensive rule, and of his many war-like expeditions, he was called Iwar Widfamne, or the Wide-embracing, and was much feared.

CHAPTER II.

AT this time two brothers of the Sköldungar race reigned together in Lejre in Zealand. The name of the eldest was Helge. He passed every summer in expedi-

tions on sea, gaining by that means much riches and honour, and on account of his great bravery was called Helge den Hwasse, the Able. The other was named Rörek, with the surname Slungering. He remained chiefly at home governing the country, and was in every respect considered less of a man than his brother. Iwar was desirous of acquiring their country in addition to his own, as it lay conveniently in the midst of his other kingdoms. When his daughter Öda was grown up, she was much famed for her beauty and great understanding; and besides being Iwar's only child was accounted the heiress of all his kingdoms, and was therefore called "Öda den djup Oda," or the Very Rich. Helge Hwasse set out to pay his court to Öda, who loved him greatly, and Iwar also treated him with friendliness, though in a private conference with his daughter, he forbade her to marry Helge. He afterwards told him, that Öda through pride refused his hand in opposition to his (Iwar's) earnest entreaties. On which Helge returned home.

Shortly after Rörek's men besought their King to make a marriage, and proposed Öda. Rörek hesitated, but his friends urging him, he spoke to Helge about it, and begged him to set out and make the overtures for him. Helge answered that the proposal was a good one, and he a happy man who would gain Öda; but that he feared the same conclusion as last time; however for his brother's sake he would try. He then set out and made his proposals to Iwar, who received him well, but said "That when Öda had rejected Helge, it was unadvised of Rörek to ask her, as he was in every way Helge's inferior." Helge, however, assured the King that Rörek was his equal in every thing, though he had not acquired so much fame as a Viking. Iwar

pretended to be disinclined, but went to speak with Öda, who replied, "That in as far as she might determine, Rörek should never have her consent; but that she saw this time as on a former occasion, her will was nothing when the King had determined otherwise." "Ill pleaseth me thy proud answer," said the King, "and I see thou art no longer inclined to stand under our authority, but King Rörek shall be thy husband notwithstanding, even though thou wilt it not." On which he left her, and going to Helge said: "Sorely have I been deceived, when till the present hour I considered Öda as the most sensible of women, for I must now confess she is very foolish, otherwise she would not have chosen the worsen brother before thee, who art so excellent a King."

Thus it was determined that Öda should have Rörek, and Helge escorted her down to Denmark to his brother; but when on their road they came to speak concerning this marriage, Iwar's treachery was revealed, and they understood how he had deceived them both. On their arrival in Denmark, a great feast was held for the nuptials of Rörek and Öda. That winter Helge abode in Denmark; but afterwards set out on his Viking expeditions as his custom was. Öda bore Rörek a son who was called Harald; he was tall and strong, and of a fine exterior, but his front teeth were very projecting, shining and coloured like gold, whence he was called Harald Hildetand; that is, of the shining teeth.

CHAPTER III.

KING IWAR'S TREACHERY.

ONE summer Iwar laid to with his ships on the coast of Zealand and sent to request Rörek to join him on his fleet. Æda asked Rörek to defer this till the next day, and placed for him a single bed in the middle of the room, and making it up with new bedding, begged him not to forget what he dreamt in it during the night. Rörek did as she desired, and the next morning related his dream to her in the following manner: "I saw a stag grazing on a fair plain. On which a leopard whose skin was like burnished gold sprung out of the wood upon him; but the stag ran his horns through the leopard under the forequarters, so that he fell dead to the ground. After this a great dragon came flying, and fastening his claws in the stag tore him to pieces. After this I saw a she-bear, followed by her young ones, and the dragon followed them both; but the she-bear defended them." And here Rörek's dream had ended.

Then spoke Æda: "A memorable dream is this, for thou hast seen the forms of King's game, and that signifies great Kings. Perhaps it may also portend a great war, nevertheless I desire thee not too much to hunt that deer. It also appears to me that thou art thyself signified by it. But one thing I counsel, and that is that thou guard thee from my father, King Iwar, that he deceive thee not." After this Rörek set out for the coast, and ascended the vessel before the cabin, saluting King Iwar, who however appeared neither to hear or to see, and gave no answer. Rörek now sought to conciliate his father-in-law, and said he had prepared a great feast to which he in his own, and in Æda's name

intended to invite King Iwar; but he was answered: "In a fatal hour I gave Öda to thee, and it is no wonder she is unfaithful to thee." Rörek said, "That he and Öda agreed well together, and that he hoped Iwar would never need to regret his consent." Then Iwar answered in wrath: "Thou seemest not to know how Öda and Helge associate; but it is in every man's mouth that Harald is Helge's son, whom he is very like, and I would prefer that thou shouldst give her up to Helge, than through cowardice leave this longer unavenged." Rörek said, "He had never heard this, and begged Iwar for good counsel; but that he would not relinquish Öda." Iwar then said, "That he should either kill Helge, for till then there would never be peace between the married pair, or else resign Öda to him." Rörek vowed that he never would resign Öda, but would rather revenge himself; on which he rode away with his men, and Iwar also immediately set sail and left the place.

CHAPTER IV.

HELGE'S DEATH.

IN the autumn when Helge returned home from sea, Rörek was very silent and black. Öda caused a great feast to be prepared for Helge, at which many games would be celebrated. It pleased Helge ill that Rörek was so melancholy, and he urged him therefore to take part in the sport, but Rörek said he had no inclination for it at that time. Helge urged him still, and proposed that he should ride a tilt with him as they were wont. Rörek then leapt up without speaking a word, went to his men, and had himself armed with helmet, breast-

plate, sword and spear, and so rode out into the tilting ground. Helge came on the ground unarmed, with only a tilting staff in his hand; Rörek then setting his lance in rest, run it right through his brother, who fell dead from his horse. The men rode up in alarm, and asked for what reason he had done this evil deed? Rörek answered, "He had good reason, for he had heard that Helge had seduced his wife." Then they all exclaimed that it was a vile lie, and that Rörek was sorely deceived. But when Öda heard what had passed, she thought it was her father's counsel, and that it was likely he would not stop there, so taking her son with her, she rode away with a great company; but Rörek travelled round the country as was his wont.

Shortly after Rörek heard that Iwar had returned, and therefore rode to meet him; but when Iwar heard of Helge's fall, he pronounced it a cowardly deed, and desired his men to arm to revenge his friend Helge's death, for which purpose he hid a part of his force in a forest at a little distance from the shore where he thought Rörek would pass. When Rörek did come up, he found Iwar with his people in order of battle before him; and when the ambuscade heard Iwar's war horns, they rushed forward attacking Rörek from behind. The battle was not long. Rörek fell with all his men; then Iwar issued an order that the whole kingdom should submit to his power; but in some days Öda came down through the country with a large assembled army, which Iwar not considering himself strong enough to resist, returned to Sweden for this time. The same winter Öda collected all her treasures, and the following spring she and many of her principal men fled to King Radbjart in Gardarike, or Russia, and craved protection for herself and her son, against Iwar's great

might. But King Iwar subdued the whole country which the brothers Helge and Rörek had possessed, and had now mastered many lands.

CHAPTER V.

KING IWAR'S DEATH.

SOME time after King Radbjart demanded Æda in marriage, and as he was a rich King, from whom both she and her son could have comfort and support, she married him, consulting her son alone in the matter and not her father. When Iwar heard this, he resolved to punish the man who had ventured to marry Æda without his permission, and therefore gathered an army, out of his different countries, so great that none could count his ships, and steered eastward with it, intending to plunder and burn King Radbjart's whole kingdom. When he had reached the Gulf of Finland where Radbjart's dominion commenced, he intended to go on shore and begin plundering. One night he saw in a dream, a huge dragon fly eastwards over the sea; his colour was like gold, and sparks flew out of him as from a furnace, so that the light of them shone on the sky above and the earth beneath. With him flew all the birds in the North, following where he led; but on the land there arose a thick cloud with sharp winds, lightnings, sleet, and beating rains. As soon as the dragon flew to the land, both he and the birds that were with him were caught in the storm, and swallowed up in so thick a darkness that they could no longer be seen; and at the same time a sounding noise was heard westward, over all the lands which Iwar ruled. On this he awoke.

King Iwar at this time was very old and enfeebled, and on waking he caused Horder, his foster-father to be called to him, that he might interpret the dream. Horder returned for answer that he was now so old, that he could no longer interpret dreams; he stood on a crag by the shore, but Iwar lay on the deck of the Admiral galley in his tent, and had drawn the covering aside, as they were speaking together. The King was anxious, and said: "Come here, Horder, and interpret the vision." "I go not there," said Horder; "neither is it needful that I should explain thy dream, for thou knowest well enough thyself what it signifies. Thou thoughtest to bow all kingdoms under thee, and didst not reflect that thou must once die. Now shalt thou speedily depart for Hel's* dwellings, and none of thine shall rule thy kingdoms after thee." "Come here!" called Iwar, "and tell me thy evil predictions!" "No!" exclaimed Horder, "here will I stand and answer thee." Then asked Iwar: "How is my father Halfdan Snälle considered amongst the Asar in Walhalla?" Horder answered: "He was like Balder whose death all the Gods did weep, and is very unlike thee." "Thou speakest well," said Iwar, "come here and tell thy story." "Here will I stand and speak," said Horder.

I was then further inquired: "How is Rörek among the Asar?" Horder answered: "He was like Häner, the most timid among the Asar, but greedy for revenge on thee." "How is Helge Hwasse?" continued Iwar. "He is," answered Horder, "like Heimdaller, the most injudicious among the Asar; but against thee very wrath." "How am I then myself considered among the Asar?" asked Iwar finally. "Thou art most hateful to them," answered Horder; "and art

* Hel, the Goddess of the dead.

called the Midgård serpent." "Then," said the King in wrathful mood, "if thou bodest my death, I bode thy death in return; I know thee well, thou grim sorcerer! come now and fight with the Midgård serpent!" Here the King became so excited and wrath, that he rushed out of his tent over the gunwale of his ship into the sea. Horder also leapt from the cliff into the water, and neither of them ever rose again. After this the chiefs sounded the horns to summon a council, and when the people were collected on shore, King Iwar's death was announced to them, and a consultation held what should be done with the army. As they had now no cause of enmity against King Radbjart, it was determined to give the troops their dismissal; and as soon as they got favourable wind every one sailed back to his own country again.

CHAPTER VI.

KING HARALD HILDETAND.

WHEN Radbjart heard this news, he gave ships and men to his step-son Harald, who sailed with them to Zealand. There he was immediately acknowledged King, and took possession of all the kingdoms which his mother's father had possessed in Sweden and Denmark. Harald was but fifteen years old when he became King, and on this account many chiefs believed they would be able to regain the kingdoms which Ingiald Illráda, and Iwar Widfamne had usurped, and caused much war and many tumults in the commencement of his reign. But he conquered all, and had such fortune, that he used neither shield nor armour in battle; wherefore the people believed that on account

of the many rebellions in his youth, his friends had made some great sacrifice, and procured enchantments which preserved Harald from being wounded by steel. Besides it is related that Odin himself had taught Harald to divide his army in an advantageous manner, namely to divide it into three bodies of which each was pointed in front and broader behind, so that in the first row one man stood alone, in the second two, in the third three, and so on. Such an order of battle was called Swinfylking, since each body was pointed in front like a swine's snout. In gratitude for this instruction, Harald is said to have promised Odin all those who fell in his battles. For these reasons Harald was finally so dreaded, that no one dared to conduct war against him, and he sat fifty years in peace in his kingdom; but to prevent his men from becoming weak and effeminate, he held continual exercise of arms, and he who winked at an ax descending close by his brow, was immediately dismissed from the court at Lejre and forfeited his pay as a coward, and chicken-hearted. King Harald was however very mild, and restored many districts to the minor Kings whom Ingiald and Iwar had driven out.

CHAPTER VII.

HARALD HILDETAND'S OLD AGE.

ODA had a son by Radbjart, who was called Randwer. Harald placed him, as a tributary to himself, in Upsala over the kingdoms of Sweden and West Gothland, but dwelt himself in Lejre. Randwer died on an expedition to England, after which his son Sigurd Ring became tributary King in his place. When King

Harald Hildetand had attained the age of one hundred and fifty, being unable to walk, he lay continually in bed from weakness, and there was no one to defend his country from the many Vikings who began to attack and plunder it on every side. This his friends did not like, and many thought that the King had lived long enough, on which some of the most powerful among them took counsel together, and determined when he was in his bath to suffocate him by laying wood and stones over it. But when Harald discovered their intention, he begged them to help him up, saying, "I know well that you think my old age is a burden on you, and it may perhaps be the case; but I will not die in a bathing-tub, but rather as becomes a King." His friends then advanced and helped him up, after which he sent messengers to Sigurd Ring in Upsala, informing him that the Danes thought Harald too old, and therefore he would wish to die as became a King in battle, for which reason he desired Ring to collect as great an army as he was able, and with it meet him at Brävik in East Gothland, where they would try who was the strongest. They then mutually began to arm, and some say they took seven years to it. Other histories however relate, that Brune, one of Harald's generals had excited the Kings to this war against each other. Ring had his people from Svea, West Gothland, Norway, and Helsingland, and amongst them were many renowned warriors, particularly Ragwald the Wise in Council, and Starkotter, who was considered the greatest warrior of that time. Harald's army was from all Denmark, East Gothland and the North of Germany. * The forces were assembled in the Öresund, and were so great, that one could pass on the fleet as on a bridge over the sea between Zealand and Scania.

Ubbe from Friesland was the most celebrated in Harald's army; there were also three Amazons, Ursina who bore Harald's banner, Heidr and Veborg, and many other great warriors besides. The armies met on Brávalla Heath in East Gothland. Harald sent out his general Brune to see how Ring had posted his troops, who when he returned related that Ring's troops stood in Swinfylking. Harald exclaimed: "Who has taught King Ring that? I thought that were known to none save Odin and myself, or perhaps Odin may will that I shall now be left without victory which I never before have been? Then would I rather fall with my whole army in the battle." He then let Brune marshal his troops, and as he was himself unable to walk, he was placed in his chariot.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BATTLE OF BRÁWALLA. ABOUT A.D. 740.

WHEN all was ready, the chiefs caused the war horns to be sounded; on which the two armies uttered a great shout, and so advanced on one another. A sharp and memorable conflict now followed, and the old Sagas relate that nowhere in the North have so many chosen and picked men striven together. When the battle had raged awhile, Ubbe, the Frieslander, advanced in front of King Harald's troops towards the enemy; in the front of King Ring's tribes, advanced Radwald the Wise in Council, and Ubbe turned to confront him. Then between these two stout-handed men, a hard battle took place, in which many desperate blows were dealt and returned; but it ended by the death of Radwald. Then Ubbe cut down the champion Tryggve, who stood next to Radwald. When Adil's sons from

Upsala saw this, they turned both upon him ; but such a remarkable warrior was he, that he slew them both, and the third Yngve in addition. When King Ring saw this, he shouted, that it was a shame to let a single man so exalt himself over a whole army, and, "where was Starkotter now, who never feared before to step foremost in the strife?" Starkotter answered, "This is a hard trial, and victory will be difficult for us now, my lord. Notwithstanding I will not fall back." Saying this he advanced towards Ubbe, and they exchanged many mighty blows. Finally Starkotter gave Ubbe a very terrible wound, but he had already received six himself, so that he thought he had never before been in such a terrible strait. Now the troops pressed upon them on both sides, and separated these two champions. Ubbe cut down another warrior, called Agnar, and then seizing his sword with both hands, cut a broad path right through Ring's troops, and was now bloody up to the shoulders. Behind Ring's army stood the inhabitants of the Telemark in Norway, whose chief art was using the bow and arrow, which the rest of the army holding in small esteem, they had been placed in the rear. When they perceived Ubbe advance through the army towards them, they said among themselves, "Now is the time for us to show that we are also brave men, and not so weak as the others esteem us to be, and we shall make this man the aim for our arrows awhile." Hadder Horde, and Hroallder amongst them, were such good marksmen that they shot Ubbe through with four-and-twenty arrows. But he never lost courage, and defended himself valiantly till he fell down dead. He had overthrown six warriors, and sixteen other men, besides having grievously wounded eleven others of note.

Veberg, the Amazon, now advanced against the Swedes

and slew the champion Sote. After this she met Starkotter, and they fought; but she was so active and supple, that she gave him a blow, which sliced the flesh off his cheek and chin. Torkil Djerfwe came up at the same moment and hewed her down; but Starkotter put his beard in his mouth, and held it with his teeth, thus retaining the loose piece of flesh, and he was now very wrath. He burst suddenly into the Danish force, and cut down the warriors Hake, Ella, Borgar, and Hjorter one after the other, and then rushed towards Ursina, the Amazon, who bore King Harald's banner. She then said: "Certes, the rage of death has now come upon you, and your last hour is surely at hand." "First, thou shalt drop the King's banner," said Starkotter; and with these words he cut off her left hand. At the same moment, Brae, the warrior, seized it; but Starkotter cut him down and other two, Grepe the Old, and Iläte; but he received himself many grievous and sore wounds. When Harald saw the great slaughter amongst his troops, he threw himself on his knees in his chariot, being unable to stand, and took a short sword in each hand; he then caused the chariot to be driven into the thickest of the fight, hewing and striking on both sides, in this manner killing many, and he was considered very manly, and to have done great deeds for his great age. Finally his own general, Brune, struck him with a club on the helmet, so that his head was cleft, and he fell dead out of the chariot. When King Ring saw the chariot empty, he understood that King Harald was slain; he therefore caused a cessation of arms to be blown on the trumpets, and offered the Danish army peace and quarter which they accepted. The next morning Ring caused the field of battle to be carefully searched for King Harald's corpse, which was

not found till the middle of the day, under a heap of slain. Ring caused it to be taken up, washed, and honourably treated according to the custom of those times, and laid it in Harald's chariot. A great mound was then raised, and the horse, which had drawn Harald during the battle, was harnessed to the car, and so the royal corpse was drawn into the mound. There the horse was killed, and King Ring caused his own saddle to be brought in, and gave it to his friend King Harald, praying him to use it in riding to dwell with Odin in Walhalla. After this, he caused a great funeral feast to be celebrated, and at its conclusion begged all the warriors and chief men who were present to honour Harald by gifts and ornaments. Many precious things were thrown in, large bracelets, and excellent arms, after which the mound was carefully closed and preserved. And King Ring remained sole governor over the whole kingdoms of Sweden and Norway.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BATTLE OF JARNAMODIR.

KING Sigurd Ring's Queen was Alfild, daughter of King Gandalf of Alfhem, the old name of Bohuslän. She was of a very beautiful appearance, like the whole of her race. By her he had a son who was called Ragnar, who became very tall and strong like his ancestor Iwar Widfamne, but took after his mother in being the most beautiful of men.

At that time there were two very celebrated Kings in Germany, Gunnar and Högne; they were King Gjuka's sons, and were therefore called Gjukings. As Sigurd Ring was a very mighty King, he thought that

no one dared resist him, and therefore sent a message to the Gjukungs, that they should either pay tribute, or fight against him. They chose the latter alternative, and the Ambassadors marked out with hazel branches the place of the future combat at Jarnamodir in Hols-tein. The following summer the troops met there, and the Gjukungs had with them their brother-in-law, Sigurd who was called Fafnisbane, because he had killed the great serpent Fafner. This Sigurd was the greatest and chiefest warrior who is mentioned in old chronicles, and his like is said never to have been seen.

King Ring was himself on an expedition against Cour-land, therefore the whole Northern army was led by his two brothers-in-law Alf and Alfarin. A violent battle took place, for these brothers conducted themselves very valiantly, and had also a huge man with them, more like a giant than a man, who broke in on the Gjukung's army and killed the horses and their riders around him, so that none could withstand him. King Gunnar, the eldest of the Gjukungs saw this would not do, and begged Sigurd to advance against that man-slayer. Sigurd Fafnisbane did so, and asked who he was. "I am Starkotter, Storwerk's son of Norway," answered the great man. "I have heard thee spoken of," answered Sigurd, "but generally not to thy advantage, and therefore thou oughtest not to be spared." "Who art thou?" retorted Starkotter, "who art so great in words against me?" "I am called Sigurd," answered the other. "Is it thou who art named Fafnisbane?" asked Starkotter again. "It is even I," answered Sigurd. Then Starkotter was afraid, and hastened away; but Sigurd slung his good sword Gram after him, so that the handle struck Starkotter on the cheek-bone, and two back-teeth flew out. This was

considered a very disgraceful blow for Starkotter; he fled out of the battle, and the whole of the Northern troops with him. The Gjukings went home, and were permitted to remain there in peace. It was long a tradition afterwards, that these back teeth or grinders of Starkotter's were so large, that one of them was used as the bell-clapper in one of the church steeples of Denmark.

CHAPTER X.

SIGURD RING'S DEATH.

KING Ring had gone down to Wiken, the gulf between Sweden and Norway to settle some disputes between his tributary Kings, on which occasion a great sacrifice was made, which was numerously attended, amongst others by King Alf's daughter from Jutland, a Princess who for her great beauty was called Alfsol, or Sun. Notwithstanding his great age, Sigurd Ring fell in love with her, and asked her to wife, though the Gods had pronounced against it at a sacrifice. But Alfsol's brothers, Alf and Inge refused to give "so fair a maid to such a withered old man." Ring was very angry that his own subjects had ventured to give him such an answer, and therefore denounced war on them, after the conclusion of the sacrifice. Alf and Inge were brave men, but still they feared King Ring's superior might and therefore gave Alfsol poison that she might not fall into his hands. They then advanced against the King, but the fortune of the day soon turned against them. Alf was cut down by Ragnar, who was now with his father, and got in consequence the name of Alfsbane. Inge fell also, and their troops fled. Sigurd

who had himself been severely wounded in the battle, ordered Alfsol to be sought for, and when he only found her corpse, he determined to live no longer. He therefore commanded all the dead bodies to be carried into a ship, seated himself by the rudder in the stern, and laid Alfsol at his side. He afterwards caused the ship to be set on fire with sulphur and pitch, hoisted all the sails, and steered with a steady wind out to sea, saying, "That he would come with magnificence as befitted a mighty King to Odin." When he got without the shores, he ran his sword through his body, and so fell dead over the corpse of his beloved Alfsol. The ship drove out to sea and perished there, but Ragnar caused his men to raise a great mound on the shore.

BOOK VII.

RAGNAR LODBROK AND HIS SONS.

CHAPTER I.

OF TORA BORGARHJORT.

AT that time lived in East Gothland, a rich and mighty Jarl, named Herröd. He was a descendant of the Asar, by Odin's son Göte, and was much famed for his bravery. He had a daughter called Tora, and it was universally said of her that she was as virtuous as she was beautiful, and one whom it were better to have, than to do without. She received the surname of Borgarhjort, or Castle Deer, because she sat in a high room shut up with a wall round it like a castle, and because in beauty she surpassed all other women, as deer does all other animals. Her father desiring to please her in every possible way, gave her a small and most beautiful snake which he had received in a charmed egg in Bjarmaland. The snake was at first coiled in a little box, but soon began to grow till the box was too small for it; finally it grew so big that the room was too small for it, and at last it lay round the outer wall, being so large that the head and tail touched. It also became so vicious and angry that none dared to go to the maiden, except the person who fed the snake, which consumed an ox at a meal. The Jarl thought all this was a great annoyance, and at last made a promise to give his daughter with a great dower to that

man whoever he were, who should kill the snake. This promise was spoken of far and wide ; but so great was the dread the snake inspired to all, that none dared to venture for the high reward.

CHAPTER II.

RAGNAR GAINS TORA BORGARHJORT.

RAGNAR, Sigurd Ring's son, was grown up by this time, and was making expeditions with well-appointed men on his ships of war, in which he had already gained the reputation of a matchless warrior. He heard Jarl Herröd's promise spoken of, but though he seemed to pay no heed to it, caused meanwhile a strange coat to be made for himself of hairy skin, and a cloak of the same kind. These he had boiled in pitch, drawn through sand, and finally hardened in the sun. The following summer he laid to with his ships in a hidden bay in East Gothland, and at the early dawn next day, putting on his strange costume, he went on shore, taking the way to the maiden's bower. There he saw the serpent lying coiled up in a ring, struck it with his lance, and before it could defend itself, gave it the second blow, pressing so powerfully, that the spear went right through ; on which the snake struggled so hard that the lance broke in the centre, and though it spit out much venom over Ragnar, his stony dress preserved him from it. The monster had now received its death wound, and made such a noise in its struggles, that the whole maiden-bower shook again. The women awoke in their garret, and Tora looked out through the window to see what was the matter. She saw below a very tall man ; but as it was yet but grey dawn, she

could not clearly distinguish his features. She asked therefore who he was, and what he wanted? Ragnar then answered with this verse :

“ For the fair maid and wise
I would venture my life.
The scale-fish got its death-wound
From a youth of fifteen.”

More than this he did not say, taking the broken handle away with him, but leaving the lance itself in the serpent's wound. Tora from this, understood that he had announced his errand and his age, and wondered if he was a man or a wizard, his size being so gigantic, particularly for his years. In the morning all this was related to the Jarl, who drew out the lance, and found it to be so heavy that few were able to move it. He then caused a great muster to be announced throughout his whole dominion, thinking that the man who had killed the serpent, would certainly as a proof bring the broken handle.

Ragnar in effect, did hear on board his ships that a general Ting was to be held in the neighbourhood. He therefore went with his men, and stopped at some little distance from the crowd already assembled. The Jarl stood up and demanded to speak. He first thanked the assembly for their obedience to his summons, and afterwards related the whole history of the snake's death, begging that he who possessed the proper handle of the lance would produce it, promising to keep his promise with whoever it might be, high or low. The head was now carried round to every body, but none could show the handle. It was afterwards brought to Ragnar, who declared it to be his, and showed the other part which fitted in exactly. It was then easy to be seen

that he was the man who had killed the serpent, wherefore the Jarl made a great feast for him and his men, and when Ragna saw Tora at it, she appeared to him so surpassingly lovely, that he asked her for his Queen. This was granted, and the entertainment was changed to a magnificent bridal, after which Ragnar conducted his bride home to his kingdom, and became very famous on account of this expedition, which gained for him the surname of Lodbrok, in reference to his strange costume.

CHAPTER III.

TORA BORGARHJORT'S DEATH.

AFTER this Ragnar set himself to govern his father's kingdom. He lived himself in Lejre, and placed Histen-Beli, Harald Hildetand's son as tributary King in Upsala over his Swedish dominions, and loved Tora so much, that for her sake he remained often at home, not going out on Viking expeditions so much as before. She presented him with two sons, Erik and Agnar, who were both stronger and more beautiful than other men, and in addition learnt all manner of feats and exercises. It once happened that Tora fell sick, and her illness increased so fast, that she died of it. This was a great grief to Ragnar, who said he would never marry another woman. He felt now no more comfort at home, but set his sons to rule his kingdoms, and wandered about himself on warlike excursions, to dissipate his sorrow.

CHAPTER IV.

OF ASLÖG.

SIGURD FAFNISBANE, in Germany, was as has before been said, one of the greatest heroes of all those nations who spoke the Northern language. He had by the Amazon Brynhilda, a daughter who was called Aslög, and who was brought up by Heimer, Brynhilda's foster-father. Sigurd Fafnisbane was betrayed by his brothers-in-law, and killed together with all his race, and Brynhilda put an end to her own life through love to him. Heimer mourned his foster-daughter's death so much, that he could no longer remain at home or cultivate his fields, and as Aslög was the only survivor of Sigurd Fafnisbane's race, he was certain that her father's enemies would seek after her to destroy her. He therefore had a very large harp made for himself in which he laid the child, together with much gold, and precious things. He then commenced his wanderings up to the North to avoid Sigurd's enemies, carrying the harp everywhere with him. When he came to streams in solitary woods, he let the maid sometimes come out of the harp to wash herself, but the rest of the time he kept her continually shut up; and when she wept sometimes, thinking herself solitary and abandoned, he struck the harp with so masterly a hand, that the maid became silent, and listened to it. But Heimer had no peace anywhere, the whole world appearing to him desolate and empty, since Sigurd and Brynhilda were gone.

After long wanderings, they came one evening to a cottage called Spangarhed in Norway, where an old man of the name of Åke lived with his wife, Grima.

She was alone at home, and asked who Heimier was? He said he was a staffsman, or beggar, and sought a lodging for the night; but as he was warming himself by the hearth, Grima saw by the fire-light, a gold bracelet glimmering under his rags, and some precious embroidery sticking out of the harp. Grima then granted his request; but said, that he would not be able to get any peace in that room, on account of her and her old man's gabbling, and bade him therefore lie in a barn, which she showed him.

When her husband presently after came home, Grima related the whole circumstance to him, giving him the counsel to murder Heimier while he slept, which would gain them riches enough to live the rest of their lives without labour and trouble. He answered, "That it seemed to him ill-done to betray his guest;" but Grima said: "Thou art little of a man, and very timid; but thou shalt either kill him now, or I will have him for my husband, and we shall kill you," accusing the man moreover of evil intentions towards herself before her husband's return. Then was Åke highly irritated, and every thing was done as this wicked woman desired; they crept into the barn, and Åke with his ax gave the sleeping Heimier his death-wound. After this, they carried the harp into their cottage and struck a light. They tried to open it, but it was so curiously closed, that they could not find the spring, and were obliged to break it up. They found great riches in it, it is true, but the pleasure they might have afforded was spoilt by the discovery of the little girl. Then Åke exclaimed, "Here the proverb comes true, that ill-luck attends him who betrays a trusting guest." Grima asked Aslög her name, but Aslög pretended to be dumb, and did not answer. "It will go ill with our business,

according to my prophecy," said the old man. "What are we to do with this child?" Grima said, "She shall pass for our own child, and she shall be called Kraka, after my mother." "There is no chance of any one believing that we, who are such an ugly and deformed couple, can have so fair a daughter," said the old man. "You will never find a good plan," retorted his wife, "but I shall manage it all. I will put tar on her head, so I think her hair will not be too long; she shall besides wear ragged clothes, and do the hardest work."

And thus they did, and Aslög grew up in great poverty and never spoke, but was considered dumb.

CHAPTER V.

RAGNAR FINDS ASLÖG.

AT this time Ragnar Lodbrok was on his sea expeditions trying to forget his sorrow for Tora's death; and one summer as he was coasting Norway, he laid his ships to in a small bay. In the morning the provision men were sent on shore to bake bread, and seeing a house not far off, they went there that they might bake more conveniently. This house was Spangarhed. Kraka had gone out early in the morning with the cattle, but when she saw so many ships coming that way, she began to wash herself and to comb her hair, though this had been strictly forbidden by Grima. She was now a most beautiful woman, and her hair was so long that it reached to the ground forming a covering on every side. She afterwards went home, and arrived as the ship-cooks were already busied in firing the oven. They asked Grima if Kraka were her daughter, which she answered affirmatively. "Then

you are very different," replied the men, "for she is the loveliest virgin, and thou art very ugly and witch-like." Grima answered. "I also was considered very beautiful in the days that I dwelt in my father's village, though no one can perceive it now because I am much changed." They now requested that Kraka might knead the dough for them, but they would themselves prepare and bake the bread. Kraka did so, but the men looking at her continually, neglected their business so that the bread was burnt. When they returned to the ship, the people said they ought to be punished for their carelessness, for never had bread been so completely spoilt. Ragnar asked the reason of this, and the men confessed all, saying they had never seen a lovelier maiden. "She is not as beautiful as Tora," said Ragnar; but they persisted in pronouncing her to be in no way her inferior. This Ragnar thought was venturing far, and therefore commanded some men to find out if this were the case, else the ship-cooks were to be punished for having outraged Tora's memory. It was very stormy that day, so the messengers could not set out. The following morning, as they were preparing to depart, Ragnar added, that if Kraka were as beautiful as Tora, she was to come to him neither dressed nor undressed, neither fasting nor satisfied, neither alone nor in company. The messengers set out, and finding Kraka's beauty to have been in no way exaggerated, they presented their King's salutation and errand. When Grima heard it, she said, "Your King is apparently not quite in his right mind;" but Kraka said, "That she would comply with his request, but not before the following day," with which answer the messengers returned.

The following morning, Kraka came to the shore. She had her hair spread out over her, and weaved in a

net; she had eaten a white onion before coming, and had the old man's sheep dog, so that she thought she had fulfilled Ragnar's intentions. She would not go on board before she had received a promise of peace and security for herself, after which, Ragnar conducted her into the cabin of the Admiral galley, and thought he had never seen a lovelier maid. They spoke awhile together, after which he made an exclamation to Odin, desiring the love of the maiden. Kraka answered: "My Lord promised peace, let him keep it also. Kraka has come; may the King let her go."

Ragnar now desired his treasurer to produce the gold embroidered petticoat which had been Tora's and offered it to Tora with these words in verse :

"Dost thou understand this? Wilt thou have the robe which adorned Tora Hjort? It suits thee well. Her white hands have played upon it. Lovely and kind was she to me till death."

Kraka answered in the same measure :

"I dare not take the gold-embroidered robe, which adorned Tora Hjort. It suits not me. Kraka, am I called in coal-black baize. I have ever herded goats on the stones by the sea-shore.

"And now I will go home," added Kraka, "and if the King's mind does not change, he can afterwards send for me." On which she returned to Spangarhed.

CHAPTER VI.

RAGNAR GETS KRAKA.

RAGNAR proceeded to the place for which he was bound; but it was not very long before he returned to Spangarhed, and sent men to fetch Kraka. She then went to Åke and Grima, and said she was going away.

“And I know well,” she added, “that you killed my foster-father, and none have done me greater evil than you. But I will do you no harm ; but this I wish you, that every day may be worse than the one before, and the last worst of all.” With that she went to the ships and was well received. At night Ragnar desired that they might repose together ; but Kraka refused, saying it was more honourable for them and their descendants if they waited till their marriage could be celebrated at home in his kingdom ; and he let her do as she pleased in this. When they got home a splendid entertainment was made, during which Ragnar’s marriage was celebrated. He had many sons by Kraka. The eldest was called Iwar. He had gristle everywhere in his body instead of bone, and was therefore unable to walk, but was carried about in a litter ; notwithstanding he was very tall and strong, and moreover wise and prudent. The second was called Björn, and afterwards got the additional name of Ironside, because he never wore armour ; but went to battle with his bare body, so that people thought that by magic he could not be wounded. The third was called Hvitserk, and the fourth Rognwald. They grew up to be strong and stout men, and became very expert in all manner of acquirements and feats of arms.

CHAPTER VII.

RAGNAR’S SONS TAKE HVITABY.

As the elder brothers had meanwhile long been engaged in warlike expeditions, and had gained to themselves much fortune and renown, the younger brothers thought they also ought no longer to remain at home un-

occupied, but rather gain themselves honour and glory abroad. Ragnar therefore gave them many ships of war, with which they visited foreign countries, fighting many battles, but gaining continual victories, so that their riches increased and their followers became more numerous. Iwar now said, that they should undertake something more difficult, so that their bravery might really be seen, and he advised attacking Hvitaby, (Whitby in Yorkshire), because many brave Kings, their father amongst the rest had been there, but had all been obliged to return with loss on account of the bravery of the people, and the necromancy that was practised there. The brothers agreed, and so they sailed to Hvitaby. They ordered their brother Rognwald with some of their company to remain on the shore, partly to watch the ships, and partly because they considered him too young for so hard a battle as they now expected. On this they went up to the castle, where, old stories relate, that there were two heifers so charmed that none were able to withstand them, or even to listen to their lowing. The defendants put themselves in array against the troops of the three brothers, and let the heifers loose, who ran forward lowing and making an evil sound which frightened the troops. This Iwar perceiving as he was borne upon shields, he took his bow and shot the heifers, which falling down dead, the battle began to turn. Meanwhile, Rognwald said to his men on the shore: "Blest are my brothers and their people, who have such sport and pastime. They have left us here, that they alone may have the glory, but we shall join them on our own account." They did so, and Rognwald advanced with such fury in the battle, that he soon fell; but the other brothers finally drove off the townspeople, took all their moveables, destroyed the castle, and returned home.

CHAPTER VIII.

KRAKA MAKES HERSELF KNOWN.

ÖSTEN, surnamed Beli, Ragnar's tributary in Upsala was powerful and cunning, but of evil counsel. He was a great lover of sacrifice, and it is related that he had a charmed cow called, Se-belja, or Ever-lowling, to which he sacrificed; and when the enemies entered the land, Se-belja was let loose against them, which so bewildered them by her lowing and magic, that they began to attack one another. For all these reasons, King Östen was much feared, and permitted to sit at home in quiet.

One summer, Ragnar coming to visit him, Östen caused a great entertainment to be prepared for his reception. He had a daughter named Ingeborg, who was very fair and lovely, and he ordered her to pour forth for himself and Ragnar at the feast. Ragnar's men then began to say that it would be more fitting that he should have such a King's daughter as Ingeborg for his Queen, instead of a peasant's daughter like Kraka. These words finally reached Ragnar's ears, who thought them not ill-spoken; he therefore affianced himself to Ingeborg, but deferred the marriage to the following summer. Ragnar then returned home, but forbade his men to speak to any of this engagement. Kraka made a great festival for his return, and at night when they were resting together, asked him for news, to which he replied that he knew none. "If you are not inclined for relating news," said Kraka, "I may do it; and it is wonderful that a King should affiance himself to one woman, when he has another already for his wife; but I will reveal to you that I am in no way a

peasant's daughter, but a King's daughter of much higher birth than Ingeborg, both by my paternal and maternal ancestry." "Who was thy father then?" asked Ragnar. "She answered, "He was Sigurd Fafnisbane, and my mother was the Amazon Brynhilda, King Budle's daughter." "It seems improbable to me," said Ragnar, "that their child should be called Kraka, and be brought up at Spangarhed." But she now related that her real name was Aslög, and all that had happened to her; and added as a sign of the truth of her words, the son of whom she was now pregnant, should have a snake in his eye. Some time after, Aslög gave birth to a son, who having the sign of which she had spoken, was called Sigurd Orm-i-Öga (Snake in Eye.) When Ragnar heard this, he rejoiced greatly over it, thought no more of Ingeborg, and loved Aslög not less than in the beginning.

CHAPTER IX.

DEATH OF AGNAR AND ERIK.

KING ÖSTEN thought great contempt was shewn to his daughter and himself by King Ragnar's breach of his engagement, so enmity ensued between the two Kings, and in consequence, Agnar and Erik armed to go and plunder in Sweden. As they were launching their vessels, a man happening to stand in the way of Agnar's ship was killed, which was by the people considered a very bad omen, but the brothers paid no attention to it, and held on their course to Sweden. There they commenced ravaging and burning the country, and continued to do so as far as Upsala, at which

place Östen, by means of messengers who had been flying through all his dominions, had collected a great army against them. He concealed two thirds of his forces, and the cow Se-belja in a neighbouring wood, and the remaining third part erected their tents on the field. When the brothers advanced and saw Östen's troop, they thought their own was equally numerous, and attacked it with great vigour, but when they were engaged in the fight, the ambush broke upon them, and it was very difficult for them to withstand the superior numbers. In addition it is said that their men became so confused by Se-belja's bellowing, that they began to fall on one another. Agnar and Erik however defended themselves manfully, and several times cut their way through Östen's troops. Finally however Agnar fell, which when Erik saw, he fought like a desperate man, not caring if he should lose his life or not. He was at last entangled in the fray and taken prisoner, on which Östen ordered the battle to cease. He then advanced towards Erik offering peace and reconciliation, adding that he would give him his daughter Ingeborg as an atonement for Agnar's life. But Erik returned answer: "I will not buy the maid's embraces for the life of my brother. I will not hear how Östen will be greeted as Agnar's bane. Then would my mother not weep, nor brave men drink to my memory. Therefore let my life depart on the sharp-pointed lances." He then demanded permission for his men to return home in peace; and desired that lances should be planted on the rampart with their points upward, on which he himself chose to be thrown. Östen said this should be done though Erik had chosen ill for them both. When all was ready, Erik drew a ring off his hand, and delivering it to his

men desired that it should be carried to Aslög ; singing thus—

Quickly speak the words.
Fallen are Erik's warriors !
Sorely will Aslög grieve
When of my death she hears.
My step-mother
Will tell it to her sons.

After this he was thrown on the lances, and seeing a raven fly over his head, sung again :

There croaks the raven
High over my head :
A merry feast will he
Make to himself of me.
Ill doth he return the many roasts •
I have carved for him in battle.

After this he gave up his life with great cheerfulness, and his men returned again to Lejre. They found Aslög at home alone, Ragnar being out at sea, and his three sons likewise. The men advanced towards her, and said they were the messengers of Erik and Agnar's death. Then she asked with great anguish what tidings they brought? If the Swedes were in the country, and if the King's sons had fallen? On which the men related how all had passed, and when they came to Erik's song as he sent her the ring, the people remarked that she shed tears which were like blood in appearance, and hard as hail-stones, no creature having ever seen her weep before or since. She answered that she was now alone and unable to do anything, but that she would afterwards take vengeance for Agnar and Erik as if they had been her own sons.

CHAPTER X.

ASLÖG AND HER SONS.

Soon after her own sons returned from Whitby. They then informed her of Rognwald's death, but she did not lament him much, saying that she had foreseen that he would not live long to any glory. "But I will inform you," she added, "that Agnar and Erik the noblest of heroes are fallen, and it will be to your eternal shame if you do not help me to avenge it." Iwar, the boneless, answered, "I will never go to Sweden to fight against King Östen and his necromancy," in which all his brothers joined. Then Aslög said: "This I know, that though Agnar and Erik were my step-sons, they would not have let you lie a year unavenged." But Iwar answered: "It is to no purpose that you utter the one incentive after the other to us, for we know better than you what danger it includes." Aslög said that those who feared such things were not dependable men, and on this she intended to retire, finding she could not move her sons; but Sigurd-Orni-Öga who was three years old, having listened to this conversation, said: "If thou so longest, mother, after three days I shall set out against King Östen, and he shall not long rule in Upsala if my Disor* are good for anything." "Thou my good child," said Aslög, "behavest thyself honourably, but it is little that thou and I can do." The elder brothers blushed when they heard this, and finally promised their assistance also. By this means a great army was made ready against Sweden, part of which was to go by land and be

* Each individual's own Fate, or Goddess of Fate was called Disa.

lead by Aslög, but the sons were to go by sea with the fleet. Both bodies afterwards met at an appointed rendezvous, and begun plundering and burning in Sweden, and destroying every living creature.

CHAPTER XI.

KING ÖSTEN'S FALL.

THE people fled before the face of this war to King Östen. He well understood whose these Vikings might be, and therefore sent out messengers and assembled all who could carry arms throughout the kingdom. Having thus collected a mighty host, he advanced against Ragnar's sons, and a violent battle ensued. It is said by old traditions that the cow Se-belja was this time also in Östen's army, and with her bellowing so terrified and confused the enemy that they all, excepting Ragnar's sons, began to fight against one another. But Iwar had caused a bow to be made for him, so large that none but he could handle it, and being borne into the fight, was seen to bend it as easily as if it had been the weakest twig. The string was then heard to sound so loud, that the like had never been known before, and the arrow flew through both Se-belja's eyes. She then fell, but presently after rushed on again bellowing worse than before. Iwar then desired his men to throw him upon the cow, and to this end made himself as light as a child for them; but when he fell down upon her back, he became as heavy as a mountain, so that he crushed her to death. After this the brothers encouraged their people, and Björn and Ilvitserk advanced bravely forward through Östen's troops, of which the greater part were

cut to pieces, and the rest took to flight. At last, King Östen himself fell, on which the brothers caused the fight to cease, and sparing the survivors returned home again.

CHAPTER XII.

RAGNAR'S SONS TAKE WISILSBORG.

RAGNAR'S sons were continually in arms, and Sigurd Orm-i-Öga grew up so fast that he was soon able to join them in their expeditions. They once came to a very strong castle called Wisilsborg which they determined to storm; but notwithstanding their courage, it was in vain. They laid siege to it, but after six months' fruitless efforts, and many stratagems of war, they gave up all hope of success and intended to return home. The inhabitants meanwhile went daily out on the walls, and spreading precious stuffs and carpets before them, showed them much gold and silver, saying tauntingly that they had believed Ragnar's sons to be other sort of men; but they had now found out that their bravery had been too much extolled. They afterwards struck their shields, and encouraged each other by loud shouts and cries. When Iwar heard this, it afflicted him so deeply, that he fell sick, and was put to bed. He lay the whole day unable to speak, but towards evening he asked a word with Björn, Hvitserk, Sigurd and the other chiefs. He then explained to them a stratagem of which he had thought, and which they carried into execution. They went at night secretly out of their tents to the neighbouring forest, and hewed great loads of wood which they carried and laid down close under the castle wall. This work they

continued till Iwar thought there was enough, when they lighted the pyre, which gave out so great a flame and such a fierce heat that the wall cracked, and began to loosen, whereon they attacked it with battering rams and succeeded in forcing a breach through it. They then killed every living creature within the walls, plundered all the goods, and burnt the castle. After this they continued their expeditions to distant lands, ravaging the south of Europe, and proposing not to stop before they had mastered Rome. They met one day a grey-headed beggar, who said he had wandered through many countries, and asked him how far it was to Rome. He then showed them two pair of old iron sandals, saying that he had worn them out on his way thence. This they thought therefore would be too far for them, so they turned, and continuing their depredations let no single castle escape them. Hereby they gained much renown, and were so much dreaded, that there was not a child who did not speak with terror of Ragnar's sons.

CHAPTER XIII.

RAGNAR'S VOYAGE TO ENGLAND.

RAGNAR meanwhile sat at home with Aslög in his kingdom, not knowing precisely where his sons were, but hearing their renown spoken of in these words: "None can compare with Ragnar's sons." A great longing and desire then possessed him, again to set out on some sea-expedition, that his old fame in arms might not rust, thinking he ought to be as good as his sons. In his youth he had subdued a King in England called Hama, but his son Ella, (or Ethelred, as he is

called by the English,) had rebelled against him. Reflecting in what direction he should command his expedition, Ragnar determined to bring this Ethelred again to his duty, and therefore caused two uncommonly large ships to be built, and a powerful army to be in readiness to accompany him. The news of this, threw all the neighbouring Kings into alarm, and each kept a sharp look out on his own frontiers. But when Aslög asked where he was bound; he answered: "For England." She said, he ought to have more ships for the purpose; but he replied, that it would not be difficult to take England with many ships; but to do so with only two, would be an unexampled exploit of arms. But Aslög objected that the large vessels could not run into the English ports, and that they would suffer shipwreck on the coast. But Ragnar had got this project fixed in his mind, and was not to be turned from it. As soon as a favourable wind sprung up, he ordered his men to go on board; Aslög accompanied him down to the ship, and then said she would now recompense him for Tora's silk petticoat which he had formerly given her. She then gave him a shirt of greyish silk, which was not sewed but woven throughout, and promised him that steel could have no effect upon him while he wore it, as it was blest by the Gods.

Ragnar accepted the gift, and said he would follow her advice; thereupon he set off, but every one could perceive that this separation went to Aslög's heart.

CHAPTER XIV.

RAGNAR LODBROK'S DEATH.

RAGNAR now sailed to England; but when almost arrived a storm threw his ships on the coast, so that they were broken to pieces; however his men with their arms fortunately escaped, and they immediately began devastating the country. King Ethelred who by his spies had heard of Ragnar's expedition, had a great army consisting of every man who could wield arms, and the best horsemen in all England assembled ready to receive him. He gave orders to his troops, however, that none should carry pointed weapons against Ragnar; for said he, "Ragnar has sons who would never leave us in peace if he were to fall here." Ragnar on his side arrayed himself in a helmet and the silken shirt which Aslög had given him, and bore no other defensive armour. The fight commenced, but as Ragnar had fewer people, the greater part of them soon fell, while he went up and down the whole day amongst Ethelred's troops, dealing such murderous blows that none could withstand him. At last all his men fell, and he found himself enclosed in a wall of shields, and so taken prisoner. They then asked him who he was; but he gave no answer. Then Ethelred said: "He shall experience worse if he will not tell us his name;" and then commanded him to be cast into a pit full of serpents, with orders to remove him immediately if he confessed himself to be Ragnar.

Ragnar was now led to the pit and thrown into it; but the serpents did not touch him. The men then drew the silken shirt off him, after which the serpents fastened on him on every side. Then spoke Ragnar

and said : "The pigs would now grunt if they heard of the boar's death, and what the old one suffers." The bystanders, however, did not yet comprehend that he must be Ragnar, but let him remain where he was. He then commenced to sing his former exploits, and his fifty battles, and that song is called Bjarkamal. Every verse begins with

We fought with our swords.*

At the conclusion, after rejoicing in the thought that no King would have more renown amongst the people than himself, he says :

Now the Gods call me,
And I mourn not to die !
Haste let us hence !
The Walkyrior whom Odin
Sends from his shield-polished hall,
Beckon us home.
Joyfully shall I drink
The ale with the Asars on their thrones.
Life's moments are past.
Smiling shall I d.e.

Ragnar now expired with great courage and good fame, and was immediately after carried out of the serpent's pit.

CHAPTER XV.

ETHELRED'S EMBASSY.

WHEN the men repeated Ragnar's death-song to Ethelred, he easily discovered that it really was Ragnar, and therefore fell into great dread of his sons. At last

* It is found translated in Blair's Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian.

he took the determination to send an embassy to them, asking to make atonement for the death of their father, and desired his Ambassadors at the same time, to take especial note of the gestures and behaviour of each as he heard of Ragnar's death.

When these arrived before the brothers, Sigurd and Hvitserk sat playing drafts, and Björn stood in the middle of the floor putting a handle to his lance. The Ambassadors entered, and saluting Iwar with deference, said they were sent by Ethelred to announce Ragnar's death. Then Sigurd and Hvitserk let the draft-board fall; but Iwar begged the messengers to relate the particulars. They did so: and when they came to the place where Ragnar said, "The pigs will grunt, &c." Björn grasped the handle of the lance so hard, that he left the marks of his fingers in it, and then hacked it so violently, that it broke in pieces. Hvitserk pressed the draughtsman which he held in his hand with such strength, that the blood sprung from the point of each finger. Sigurd sat paring his nails with a knife, and listened with such attention to the relation, that he did not remark that he had cut himself to the bone, and seeing it, he did not heed it. Iwar asked carefully about every particular, and his colour sometimes became blue, sometimes pale, sometimes red. Hvitserk wanted to cut down the messengers on the spot; but Iwar bade them go in peace, and so they returned home. When Ethelred was informed of the brother's gestures, he said: "We have most to fear from Iwar's temper, though nothing good towards us apparently moved the others interiorly;" and therefore caused his coasts to be carefully watched that no enemy might fall upon him unawares.

CHAPTER XVI.

RAGNAR'S SONS' EXPEDITION TO ENGLAND.

THE brothers now prepared for revenge ; but Iwar said he would have no part in it, nor fight with Ethelred who was innocent, for Ragnar had been himself the origin of his own ruin. The others were angry, and said they would not cross their hands on their knees and endure such a shame, even if Iwar would ; and that they had before killed so many innocent men, it was useless to draw back for this one. They therefore began to gather their forces, though no great numbers joined them when it was known that Iwar, on whose wisdom all depended, would not take part in the war. The brothers set out, but they found Ethelred already prepared, were overcome by superior numbers, and obliged to fly to their ships again. Iwar had also accompanied them, though he did not take part in the combat, and said, " He would now rather go over to King Ella and take an atonement for his father, than meet with more such disasters as the present." Hvitserk answered, that he would never take an atonement for his father's death, and that they would bear no part with Iwar ; on which they sailed home. But Iwar went to Ethelred, and did as he had said. Ethelred would not believe him, till Iwar swore to him never to carry arms against him. Iwar then asked as the atonement for his father's death, as much land as he could cover with an ox hide, which Ethelred did not find a great request, and willingly granted. Iwar now got a very large hide, and caused it to be steeped and stretched many times, and at last cut into the very narrowest strips, which were bound together into a very long band,

with which he surrounded a large space on a height, and there founded a castle which he named Lunduna.*

Many people removed here, for Iwar was soon renowned for his generosity and good counsel with which he often even aided King Ethelred. When several years had passed thus, he sent and asked from his brothers, his share in the inheritance of Ragnar's moveables, and then received much and costly treasure, with which he gained himself the friendship of the English chiefs, and the promise of remaining neuter if any war broke out. After this, he sent his brothers a message to collect their forces throughout their dominions, and with these come to England against Ethelred. They now comprehended Iwar's cunning, and did as he desired. As soon as Ethelred heard of their arrival, he ordered his people to collect, which they did but slowly. Iwar went to him and said, that he would keep his oath to the King, but as he could not fight against his brothers, he would rather try to reconcile them. His brothers, he urged to attack Ethelred immediately while his forces were so weak; and when he saw the latter again, affirmed that his brothers had rejected his mediation. Meanwhile the brothers made their attack, and with such success, that they soon dispersed Ethelred's troops and took himself prisoner. Iwar had not fought against him for his oath's sake, but he now advanced, and bid him remember what death he had made their father suffer. By Iwar's orders, therefore, an eagle was drawn upon Ethelred's shoulders, which was done by cutting the flesh away from the back. Salt was then thrown into the wound, and the ribs cut from the back-bone and bent outwards like the wings of an eagle, after which the lungs

* Lincoln.

were drawn through this wound. Ethelred was thus sorely tortured and tormented before he died, and the brothers then thought that they had amply revenged the death of their father Ragnar.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PARTITION OF THE KINGDOMS.

IWAR reserved to himself Ethelred's kingdom in England leaving his father's dominions to his brothers. Björn Jernsida got those parts of Sweden which were called Swea and Gothaland, and became the ancestor of many Swedish Kings. Sigurd Orm-i-Öga got the Danish Isles, Halland, Skåne, Bleking, Bohuslan and the southern part of Norway. Harald Hårfager, the first King of all Norway, descended from his daughter Aslög. Hvitserk got Jutland, and the southern coast of the Baltic. In a war against Russia, he was once overpowered by superior numbers, taken prisoner, and the choice of his death being given to him, he preferred being burnt on a pyre of men's heads. These brothers carried on many and great wars, which are not here narrated, and when they were dead, their men travelled far and wide seeking new masters, and were thus engaged by many rich Princes and mighty Kings, but thought they never again found such leaders and such men as Ragnar Lodbrok and his sons.

BOOK VIII.

OF ANSGARIUS, AND HOW THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION
WAS FIRST PREACHED IN SWEDEN. A.D. 825.

CHAPTER I.

ANSGARIUS'S YOUTH.

ANSGARIUS was born in Germany where the Christian religion had already been preached. He lost his mother at an early age, and was by his father put to school to learn to read, but was in the beginning more given to play and vanities than to his instruction and improvement. It is related that he once dreamt that he stood on a place full of mud and uncleanness, and saw near him a green and beautiful path on which a glorious-looking woman was walking, dressed in white and shining clothes whom Ansgarius thought he understood to be the Virgin Mary. Many other women, also in white and shining robes were walking with her, amongst whom Ansgarius recognised his mother. When he saw her, he began struggling to come to her, but could not disentangle himself from the mire. The Virgin Mary then came towards him; saying, "Son, thou wouldst go to thy mother; but if thou wouldst come to our company, thou must fly all vanity and lead a pure and godly life, for we hate that which is vain and unfit. and he who loves such things cannot be among us." After this dream, Ansgarius was much changed, and occupied himself with serious and useful

pursuits. When he grew up, he became a monk in New Corbej Abbey, and a preacher in the Abbey Church. He was much famed for his piety and the purity of his life, so that the monks believed him to have celestial revelations in sleep, and the people thought that the laying on of his hands cured diseases. He was sent by the French Emperor, Louis the Pious, to preach Christianity in Jutland, which he did with much success, and though many dangers surrounded him, he stopped long amongst the heathen.

CHAPTER II.

ANSGARIUS PREACHES TO THE HEATHEN IN SWEDEN.

AT this period, Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish Vikings swarmed throughout the whole of southern Europe, and caused universal dismay by their plundering and marauding. It was therefore determined at several Church Councils to attempt the conversion of these heathen people to Christianity, and by softening their manners and feelings, put an end to their murder and bloodshed. At the same time Ambassadors from King Emund in Upsala reached the French Emperor Louis, who having despatched the principal business on which they were sent, related that many persons in Sweden desired to be instructed in Christianity, and that King Emund would give the priests who came to him a good reception. It was then determined to send some of the clergy, but none dared to undertake this dangerous voyage, except Ansgarius and one* of his brethren. He received many presents from Louis for the Swedish monarch, and set out with the Ambassadors ; but their ship was fallen upon by Vikings, who

took all their treasure from them ; and a few books was all they were able to save. On this the other priest desired to return, but Ansgarius said : “ I give myself, body and soul into God’s care, and do not return till I have preached Christianity in that land.”

They therefore continued their journey, and crossing lakes, rivers, forests and morasses, after many dangers at last reached Björkö,* where the Kings of Sweden often lived at that time. King Emund had a co-regent named Björn, who was called Björn-på-Häga, because he generally lived at the royal estate of that name near Upsala. This Björn received Ansgarius well, and let him preach Christianity in the town, where he converted many from the worship of idols, and amongst others Hergeir, the King’s chief counsellor and Governor of Björkö. This Hergeir caused a Church to be built on his estate, the first founded in Sweden.

In a year and a half Ansgarius returned to Germany. The Emperor Louis then founded an Archbishopric in Hamburgh, that Christianity might be more easily promoted in the North ; and Ansgarius, though but thirty years old, was the first Archbishop. He then consecrated as Bishop of Björkö, a monk called Gautbert, who is likewise known by the name of Simon, exhorting him to be careful of the people, not asking their possessions, but rather as Ansgarius had done, gaining his maintenance by the labour of his hands, and set the pattern of a pure and holy life. In addition, Ansgarius gave out of his own means all that Simon could require for his voyage, and on his arrival ; but this Bishop Simon was soon so detested, that the heathen fell upon him, killed his assistant, and drove

* Björkö, a town on Lake Mälär, whose situation is now not easily determined.

himself out of the kingdom. When the country was thus left without a preacher, Christianity was much neglected. However Hergeir remained firm to his new faith, for which he was much derided. According to a monkish legend, he was once at a Ting where the heathens made mockery of his religion. Hergeir then said: "We will try which God is the most powerful: you see that a heavy rain is coming on, call ye on your Gods, and I will pray to my God who has shaped Heaven and earth that no rain may fall upon me. He whose prayers are granted has the mightiest God." They did so, and it is said that no drop fell on Hergeir, though the heathens who sat close by him were wet to the skin.

CHAPTER III.

ANSGARIUS'S SECOND VOYAGE TO SWEDEN.

As the kingdom had now long remained without a preacher, and no other ventured to travel there, Ansgarius took the determination to make a second voyage to Björkö. A great Ting had been held shortly before his arrival, when a man had stepped forward and said, that he had met all the old Gods, and that they, by him, had sent this message to the King and the people: "We have long for love to you, and for your worship and sacrifice, granted you peace and good years. Your zeal in our service is now diminishing, and you serve a strange God more than us. This you must set aside if you ever desire to regain our favour. If you must have other Gods, you are permitted to take your former King Erik into our company, that he may be a new God to you."

Thus incited, the heathen built a new temple to King Erik. Ansgarius arrived immediately on this, and was advised by his friends to return without delay, and avoid the persecutions which awaited him; but he declared that "nothing should make him fly, and that he was ready to suffer torments and death for Christ's sake." He was well received by the King whose name was Olof, but he did not venture on his own authority to permit Ansgarius to preach in Björkö, but was obliged first to consult the people in a general Ting.

There was much noise and shouting at the Ting of the heathen against the new doctrine; but when the first tumult had somewhat subsided, an old man stepped forth and spoke thus: "Hear me all, both King and people. Here are many amongst us, who in dangers, both by sea and land, have experienced how mighty is this new God to assist those who call upon him. Therefore some have gone even to Dorstad,* only to be baptized and christened; and have on such voyages suffered from the attacks and treachery of the Vikings, and many other dangers. Why then should we not receive that with good will here, which we with so much danger have sought in foreign lands? When our own Gods can no longer help us, it is well for us to have the favour of this mightier God."

The people were mollified by these words, and Ansgarius was therefore permitted to preach Christianity in Sweden. He converted very many, built a Church in Björkö, provided for the poor and fatherless and ransomed prisoners. After some time, he returned to Germany, and the faith was afterwards much persecuted in Sweden, for no preacher ventured to come there. Ansgarius was a very pious man after the manner of

* A town in Holland.

those times. He was easily moved to tears, and bore a purse continually at his side that he might give alms to the needy. He fasted often, and washed the feet of the poor according to our Saviour's words. To keep under his body, he always wore a hair-skin shirt next to his skin, eating only bread and drinking water, and that according to a fixed measure. He was very zealous for the conversion of the Northern nations, and spared neither himself nor his possessions for this purpose. He was canonized by the Pope after his death, and worshipped as the patron saint of the North. His bones were sent to different countries, and preserved as sacred relics.

BOOK IX.

OF KING ERIK SEGERSÄLL.

CHAPTER I.

KING ERIK SEGERSÄLL, AND STYRBJÖRN STARKE.

OLOF and Erik were the names of two brothers of the Iwar race who ruled together in Upsala. Olof died early, leaving a son behind him, called Styrbjörn, who being but very young at his father's death, Erik reigned alone. He was very friendly and beloved by the people, and in addition very brave, so that he subdued Finland, Ettonia and Livonia to the crown of Sweden, and gained the surname of Segersäll or the Victorious. His nephew Styrbjörn, meanwhile, grew up in Upsala, and was of a very violent disposition. He was once at play with a man of the Court, named Åke, and threw a mantle over his head. The man being unable to see, chanced to strike a drinking cup against Styrbjörn's nose which angered him so much that he killed Åke, and afterwards refused to pay the usual atonement to Åke's relations, saying, "he would only pay to the King himself, who might afterwards settle with Åke's friends the best he could." When Styrbjörn reached his twelfth year, he asked his father's share in the government, and refused to make his appearance at the King's table in Upsala; but seated himself often on his father's grave, that he might thus turn the hearts of

the people towards him. King Eri begged him to wait till he was sixteen years old, being yet too young to undertake so great a charge as the government of a whole kingdom; but Styrbjörn would by no means listen to this. He therefore presented himself at the next Disar Ting at Upsala, accompanied by his mother's brother Jarl Ulf, and claimed from the people his share in the inheritance of the kingdom; and though the commons rejected this in consideration of his youth, still continued with threats and violence to insist upon it.

This irritated the people so much, that with blows and stones they drove Styrbjörn and Ulf from the Ting, and afterwards chose another joint heir for Erik; that Styrbjörn might in future have no hope. He therefore went to Erik, and demanded to be fitted out for a Viking expedition as became a King's son. Erik agreed to this, and gave him sixty well-appointed ships with which he set out, and his first feat was to seek for, and slay those men who at the Disar Ting had set up the second King. After this he sailed from Sweden, making the vow, however, that he would one day either rule over this whole kingdom, or lose his life in the attempt. And Styrbjörn was now fourteen years old.

CHAPTER II.

STYRBJÖRN'S EXPEDITIONS.

STYRBJÖRN afterwards sailed far and wide ravaging the coasts of the Gulf of Bothnia. He was very bold and brave in fight, and being, moreover, stronger than most other men, received the surname of Starks (the Strong.) At that time there was a famous castle in

Pomerania, called Jomsborg, which had been founded by Palna-Toke, a Danish chief, and was considered almost impregnable. Besides its very harbour lay within the fortress, so that the fleet lay there in perfect security. The men in the castle were called Jomsvikings, and had a law for themselves, of which the first condition was, that no one should be admitted into their number without the consent of the whole. 2nd. None under eighteen, or above sixty years were to be admitted. 3rd. No one who was married, for women were never permitted to enter the walls. 4th. None who had refused a challenge to single fight; and many other hard conditions. These Jomsvikings were considered the bravest of men, and were much dreaded in that day, notwithstanding Styrbjörn succeeded in surprising and taking the castle during Palna-Tokes' absence, and by this he became very powerful and famous. The King, who at this time reigned in Denmark was Harald Blåtand, who after many contentions was driven out of the country by his own son, Sven Tweskägg. He then fled to Styrbjörn, and with his assistance was reinstated in Denmark. As a reward for this, Styrbjörn got Harald's daughter, the beautiful Tyri for his wife, and Harald was obliged to promise to assist him with one hundred ships against King Erik in Upsala. On this, Styrbjörn made mighty preparations and collected one thousand ships in Jomsborg. He waited some time for the vessels Harald Blåtand had promised him; but when he saw himself deceived, he set out in wrath with all his fleet to Denmark, and forced Harald, instead of one hundred, to arm two hundred vessels for his assistance, and even himself to accompany him on his expedition. They then sailed for Upsala; but the Danes sung contemptuous songs about Harald, calling

him Styrbjörn's slave, and were displeased that their King should endure such compulsions from a foreign youth.

CHAPTER III.

THE BATTLE OF FYRISVALL. A.D. 983.

ERIK SEGERSÄLL reigned meanwhile in Upsala, and was a great and renowned King. Skoglar Toste, a freeholder and celebrated Viking in West Gothland, had a daughter named Sigrid, much famed for her beauty, but very proud and haughty. King Erik chose her for his Queen, and gained much support in the country from her relations, particularly from Torgny the Wise, who was Judge in Upland. When King Erik heard that Styrbjörn with his great fleet had entered Lake Mälär, he sent out summons throughout the kingdom for all the men at arms to meet in Upsala. He then blocked the entrance of Flöt Sound, so that Styrbjörn could not sail out of the lake towards Upsala. When the latter arrived, he made his men go on shore, and burnt all his ships; that the people might fight with the more courage, having no hopes of safety by flight. Scarcely was this done, when Harald Blåtand crept with his men on board his ships, put out to sea, and so sailed home to Denmark, leaving Styrbjörn in the trap. This he and his army were obliged to witness from the shore, having no means of preventing or punishing Harald's treachery. He, however, did not lose courage, but made his men cut a broad road through the forest, to the great plain of Fyrisvall, near Upsala. On this plain he marshalled his army, having many brave chiefs in it, amongst others his uncle, Jarl Ulf, and Björn

Bredviking, an Icelander. Erik Segersäll marshalled his men on the other side, and Torgny the Judge was his chief man both in word and deed. The battle was violent and long. Torgny had caused chariots to be made with lances projecting in front, and sickles and scythes fastened on each side, which were drawn by condemned criminals into the enemies' ranks, and caused great havoc; but Styrbjörn had such superior numbers, that in spite of this he was able to make a stout resistance; and so they fought on the whole day without being able to conquer on either side. During the night many people from the neighbourhood joined Erik, so that his army was not less than on the first day. But the Jomsvikings were such brave men, that they kept up the fight the whole of the second day, and at its conclusion no one could yet determine who would gain the victory. The chiefs made sacrifice during the night to propitiate the Gods. Styrbjörn sacrificed to Thor; and it is said that a red bearded man, who was thought to be Thor, shewed himself to Styrbjörn announcing his defeat. Erik on his side, went up to the temple in Upsala, and sacrificed to Odin, promising himself to the God at the expiration of ten years, if he would only this time grant him the victory. It is said, that a one-eyed man in a wide blue cloak, with a wide hat on his head, then showed himself to Erik, and gave him a lance which he should throw against Styrbjörn's troops, saying, "Ye now all belong to Odin!" and this man was thought to have been Odin himself. The third day a much severer conflict ensued, and during this night, as the former numerous reinforcements had joined King Erik from the neighbourhood. But a universal panic presently overtook Styrbjörn's men; they fancied the air was full of light arrows hovering over their heads

which blinded and confused them, and were thought to be sent from Odin. Besides a sand-hill in the neighbourhood slid down upon them, causing much confusion. When Styrbjörn saw that all at last was inclining to his fall and defeat; he struck, with anguish and despair, his banner fast into the ground, and shouted with a terrible voice to the remnant of his troops, that it was better to die with glory than to fly with shame. He then cast himself wildly amongst the enemy, and so fell pierced with many wounds. The greater part of his men followed him, and few fled or surrendered themselves prisoners. When the battle was done, King Erik mounted on one of the mounds, and promised a great reward to him who could sing a *Drapa** on this battle. On this, Torwald Hjalteson, an Icclander, presented himself, and sung for the King and the army a glorious song of victory, and received as a reward two precious gold chains; and this Torwald neither before or since had ever meddled with poetry. After this, Erik's son, who was only two years old, was carried before the troops and was proclaimed, and received homage as his father's successor, and sovereign of the whole kingdom. As he was, on account of his age, on this occasion carried in arms, he was called Olof Sköt-Konung, or Olof Lap-King. Styrbjörn left a son called Torkil Sprakalägg, whose son was named Ulf, and was the father of Sven Ulfson, from whom a whole race of Danish Kings descend.

* *Drapa*; a song of victory.

CHAPTER IV.

DEATH OF ERIK THE VICTORIOUS.

SIGRID was so proud and imperious, that Erik could not live with her ; so they separated, and she went to her estates in West Gothland, where great power was granted her by him. He afterwards married Öda Jarl, Håkan's daughter from Norway. Before Erik's time, the Kings had commonly co-regents with them, but Erik changed this custom, and took in their place as an assistant in the government, an officer, who was called Sweden's Jarl, as a distinction from the other insignificant Jarls. Erik drove King Sven Tweskägg from Denmark, and died precisely ten years after the battle of Fyrisvall.

BOOK X.

OLOF SKÖTKONUNG.

CHAPTER I.

OF SIGRID STORRÅDA.

OLOF SKÖTKONUNG succeeded to the kingdom after his father. His mother, Sigrid, lived on her estates, and was far-famed for her beauty, wisdom, and riches. Harald Grenske, a tributary King, once came from Norway to West Gothland to pay his court to her, but she refused his request, and immediately set off for another of her estates. Harald followed her though his men advised him not, and when he arrived at the place where she had retreated, he found another King, called Wifawald from Russia, was there before him who had also come on the same errand. They were both conducted to a large hall, where Sigrid caused them to be richly provided with mead and ale, so that they became intoxicated, and fell asleep. After that, she caused the doors to be shut, and the hall set on fire, so that those who were within were burnt to death, or killed by her people. "Thus," said Sigrid, "she would teach petty Kings to come making love to her." And for this haughty behaviour of hers, she was called Sigrid Storrada.

At that time, a King called Olof Tryggwason, who was widely renowned for his bravery and understanding, ruled in Norway. In his youth he had travelled much,

and in England had embraced the Christian religion, for the spread of which he was very zealous. He came finally to Norway where Håkan Jarl reigned. Håkan was then killed, and Olof taken as ruler over the whole kingdom where he partly persuaded, and partly forced the people to accept the Christian faith. He once sent Ambassadors to Sigrid Storräda seeking her hand in marriage, and received a gracious answer; the following summer they met and their union was agreed on. Then Olof said that Sigrid should first accept the Christian religion and be baptized, to which she answered: "It is not likely that I will abandon the faith I have held before, and my friends before me; but you may, for all I care, willingly believe in what God you please." Then Olof was very wrath, got up, and said hastily: "Why should I wish to know you, you heathen hound!" with which he struck her on the face with his glove. Then Sigrid stood up, and said: "This blow will once prove your bane," on which they parted. Sigrid afterwards married King Sven Tweskügg, who for her sake got back his kingdom in Denmark, and she never ceased exciting him, and her son Olof Skötkonung against Olof Tryggwason.

CHAPTER II.

QUEEN TYRI.

AN enmity had arisen between King Sven in Denmark and King Burislaf in Windland,* which Sigwald Jarl of Jömsborg proposed to appease on condition that Burislaf should get Tyri, King Sven's sister, and

* Windland, afterwards called Wenden, means the southern coast of the Baltic where the Wenden lived.

Styrbjörn Starke's widow to wife; but Tyri gave a positive refusal, as Burislaf was a heathen and she a Christian, and so the marriage did not take place. Burislaf complained of this, till he forced Jarl Sigwald at last to go to King Sven, and persuade him to give Tyri up into Sigwald's hands. She was then conducted against her will to King Burislaf, who caused a great wedding-feast to be prepared, taking her as his Queen; but she neither ate nor drank as long as she was among the heathen; and after seven days, one night she fled secretly from the place with her foster-father, concealing herself in the forests, and keeping the most solitary paths. Thus they passed through Denmark and Sweden, not daring to stop till they reached Norway. There Tyri made herself known, and revealed the whole circumstances to King Olof Tryggwason. He gave her rest and protection in his kingdom; and as he thought her a fair woman, and moreover that she spoke sensibly and well, he asked her for his wife, to which she agreed, thinking it was an honourable marriage to get such a famous King as defender and spokesman. Their marriage was therefore celebrated; but no message was sent to King Sven, neither was his consent asked. When Queen Tyri had been in Norway some time, she began with fair words to try to persuade King Olof to go to Windland, and there demand her dowry which consisted of many precious effects; but all Olof's friends counselled him against this voyage, for they feared that Queen Sigrid would persuade Sven Tweskägg to attack Olof on his way through Denmark.

One spring day the King had found a rose which was uncommonly blown for the season, he carried it to the Queen's apartments; but when he came, he found that she was sitting weeping. Olof then gave

her the rare rose, but Tyri put it aside with her hand, saying: "Greater treasures gave my father, Harald Blåtand, who by the edge of the sword took all Norway with its taxes and revenues; but you are afraid to pass through Denmark for King Sven my brother's sake." Then the King angrily started up, saying: "I fear not to go for thy brother Sven 'Tveskäg's sake, but the loss will be his when we meet." The King then caused a Ting to be sounded, and announced that he intended this summer to undertake the voyage to Windland, and demanding ships and men from the whole kingdom. He thus got together sixty well-armed vessels, with which he steered south to Windland, taking Queen Tyri with him on the expedition.

CHAPTER III.

CONSPIRACY AGAINST OLOF TRYGGWASON.

JARL ERIK had ever since his father Jarl Hakan's death been banished from Norway by Olof Tryggwason. His summers he passed in the usual piratical expeditions, acquiring riches and renown for his bravery, but his winters were spent sometimes with King Sven in Denmark, sometimes with Olof Skötkonung in Sweden, and he sought to form an alliance between these two Princes against Olof Tryggwason, in the hope of re-acquiring Norway, his paternal inheritance.

When it was known in Denmark that Olof Tryggwason had sailed for Windland, Sigrid Storråda went to her husband, King Sven, and made her representation of the matter, saying that Olof Tryggwason had without Sven's permission married his sister Tyri, which none of his renowned ancestors would ever have

permitted. She finally irritated him to that degree, that he sent a message to King Olof in Sweden, and Jarl Erik, begging them to come to Denmark with their fleets and armies, that they might make a joint attack upon Olof Tryggwason. Meanwhile he sent Sigwald Jarl of Jomsborg, as a spy to the Court of the latter. This man had, during the foregoing events, insinuated himself with King Burislaf, and got the whole of Queen Tyri's dower; but when he joined Olof Tryggwason, he contrived by his arts and cunning so to ingratiate himself in his favour, that he became his best friend and counsellor. He found all manner of excuses for delaying Olof's departure from Windland, and when a rumour reached them that King Sven of Denmark was making preparations for war, Sigwald insisted it was but a rumour, persuading Olof that it was not very likely Sven Tweskägg would venture to fight against him and his great armies, and offering besides to accompany him with his own troops if Olof pleased. In these efforts he succeeded, and received shortly after secret intimation that King Olof of Sweden, Sven of Denmark, and Jarl Erik were prepared, and lay with their fleets behind the Island of Swolder on the Pomeranian coast waiting for Olof Tryggwason, when he would pass that way. Sigwald then hurried the departure, which soon after took place. Olof Tryggwason had many large and powerful ships in his fleet, but of these, three were particularly remarkable, and were called *Tranan*, *Ormen Korta*, and *Ormen Langa* (the short and long serpent). They were all dragon-ships,* and larger than any others. *Ormen Langa* was, however, the largest, and its like in beauty,

* Dragon ships was the name given to those which were very large, and had a dragon's head carved on the prow; and over the stern, the appearance of a coiled dragon's tail.

strength, and size, had never been seen in the north. King Olof Tryggwason himself steered it, and it had a chosen company of very brave and stout men. Ulf the Red, who bore the King's banner, and Kolbjörn Stallare* were Stambos on board: that is, appointed to defend the stern of the vessel, a post which always was reserved for the bravest. Enar Tambaskelfwer, a good marksman, though only eighteen years old, was also of the company. The smaller ships were lighter sailers, and took the lead; but Jarl Sigurd said, that as he knew the soundings he would go ahead, that the large vessels might not strike on the sandbanks between the islands. King Olof Tryggwason, who believed in the Jarl, followed him, and he steered his course right for the Island of Swolder.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONVERSATION OF THE CHIEFS.

It was very beautiful weather and clear sunshine the day that the Kings of Sweden and Denmark, together with Jarl Erik and a number of people had ascended a height on the island to look round them, and their fleet lay near the shore under cover of the island. They had made the agreement before, that if they could vanquish Olof Tryggwason, they would divide Norway between themselves, and each retain the ships which he conquered. They now saw many vessels out at sea, one of which was very large. Then both the Kings said it must be Ormen Långa, but Jarl Erik denied it. Shortly after a much larger ship was seen, but it was not a Dragon-ship. Then King Sven said: "Olof Tryggwason is certainly afraid since

* Stallare, Marshal.

he dares not set up the Dragon's head on his ship." Jarl Erik answered: "That is not Ormen Länga; but I see by the striped sails that it is Erling Skjalgsson's ship, and it is better to let it sail past, than to have it against us in the battle." Behind this came three other large vessels of which one was very remarkable for its size. Then Sven exclaimed: "Let us now haste to our ships, for there goes Ormen Länga surely." But Erik Jarl replied: "There are more large and fine ships in Norway than Ormen Länga, and so we may yet tarry awhile." The men then spoke amongst themselves saying: "Erik Jarl does not dare to fight and revenge his father's death;" but the Jarl gave no heed to their words. Awhile after this came three ships, among which was a large gilt Dragon-ship. Then King Sven stood up and said: "Ormen Länga shall carry me far to-night, for her will I steer!" On which Jarl Erik said so loud that many heard it: "Had King Olof no more and larger ships than those which now are seen, Sven Tweskägg with his might has no chance of conquering them;" but this ship was Ormen Korta. At the same moment, three great vessels came sailing from behind the promontory, and after them followed a fourth, an enormous and magnificent Dragon-ship, whose match in size and splendour they had never seen before. It was painted and gilt all over, and so long that there were eight and fifty oars on each side, and was besides so lofty that its deck stood high out of the water. There was then no further dispute, for all saw that this was Ormen Länga, and it is said that many who had before spoken great words became silent at this sight, and forgot further to urge Jarl Erik to the attack; but he now ordered his people to haste to the fleet, and all hurried down preparing themselves for the fight.

CHAPTER V.

OLOF TRYGGWASON'S PREPARATION.

JARL SIGWALD, who was acting as pilot for the Norwegian King, let his sails drop as he advanced and rowed in under the island of Swolder. The captains of the other large vessels seeing this also lowered their sails, waiting till Olof Tryggwason was come up; for they feared they were betrayed, and at the same moment that Ormen Långä sailed in under the island, the united fleets of the enemy rowed forward to meet him. Some of his people then opined that Olof ought to retreat, and not to engage with such superior numbers; but the King mounted the stern, and cried aloud: "Lower the sails! I have never fled, and God may dispose of my life, but I shall never fly!" He ordered that they should lash their ships together which was done, and the prows of Tranan and Ormen Korta, were bound to that of Ormen Långä. When the King saw this, he objected to it, saying, that the stern of Ormen Långä should project as far beyond the other vessels as she was longer than they. When Ulf, the Stambo, heard this, he said: "In this way the prow of Ormen Långä will soon be mastered." Then answered the King: "I did not know that I had a Stambo who was a coward." Ulf answered: "Defend you the stern to-day, only as I shall defend the prow." Then the King being angry, laid an arrow on his bow and aimed at Ulf; but Ulf said: "Shoot rather at others, King, for that is needed now! I shall do my best." After that, the ships were bound together, and the prow of Ormen Långä was made to project beyond the others as the King had commanded.

Olof Tryggwason stood high in the stern of his vessel, and was seen above all the rest. He had a gilt helmet and shield as well as a short red cloak over his coat of mail, and was thus distinguished from all except Kolbjörn Stallare who was dressed very like him. The enemy's fleets had by this time drawn up in line of battle in three divisions. Olof Tryggwason asked: "Who is chief of that fleet which lies just opposite to me?" and the people answered it was Sven Tweskägg with the Danish troops. The King observed: "We do not fear that tender people, for the Danes have no courage; but who are those advancing to the right?" He was told that it was Olof Skötkonung with the Swedish force. The King said: "Better would it be that the Swedes should sit at home and lick their bowls of sacrifice than try to mount Ormen Langa with their arms. But who are those who steer the ships to the left?" The people said: "That is Jarl Erik and his men." Then said the King: "He has a lawful cause of fight against us, and there will be a hard battle for they are Normen like ourselves." But of Jarl Erik's ship, it is said that it was very large and called Jernbarden, as the whole prow was bound round about with iron and sharp points.

CHAPTER VI.

BATTLE OF SWOLDER. A.D. 1000.

THE Kings now arranged themselves in this manner. King Sven sailed against Olof Tryggwason; Olof Skötkonung attacked the ships furthest to the right, and Erik Jarl those to the left, but Jarl Sigwald held himself apart and had no share in the battle, which was

very severe. The Stambos on the Tranan, Ormen Långa and Korta hooked King Sven's ships to their own and so held them fast. As the Norwegians stood very high on their ships in comparison with the Danes, these latter could but ill-defend themselves against the blows of the former, and the foremost ships were speedily cleared. Sven Tweskägg and the rest who escaped with life, leapt on their other ships and rowed them beyond the reach of the Norwegians, thinking this sport went rather against them. Then Olof Skötkonung and his ships turned against Ormen Långa, and it is related in a few words that the same ill-fortune attended him as Sven, and that he was obliged to steer clear of the Norwegians. Jarl Erik meanwhile had cleared several of the outer vessels, and as soon as this was done, he hewed them loose from the Norwegian fleet, and thus continued fighting hand to hand, while the Swedish and Danish fleet lay round about assailing the Norwegians with their bows and arrows; and as soon as the men had fallen on his ship, they were replaced by a new company from the other vessels. Finally the Norwegians began to spring from the smaller upon the larger vessels, and thus the Jarl continued until he had at last removed all the vessels except Ormen Långa on which the remainder of the Northmen had crowded, and alongside of which he laid his own vessel Jernbarden when the most raging fight recommenced. The Northmen were so irritated that many, in their zeal to attack their enemies, forgot that they were at sea, and leaping overboard fell into the water. King Olof stood the whole day in the stern fighting manfully, chiefly by throwing the lance, for he was so practised in this that he could throw with both hands at one time. He saw how his men were dealing hard and

thick blows, but remarking that few of the enemies fell before them, he called to ask the reason of it, or if his men struck false? But his men answered that their swords were blunted in the fight, and were serviceable no longer. The King then opened his chest of arms, and gave the people new and sharp swords, so the fight was renewed; but as he stooped to take the arms out of the chest, the men remarked that blood ran from under his armour, by which they understood that he was wounded. Enar Tambaskelfwer used his bow the whole day, and laid many men low. He remarked how Jarl Erik stood on Jernbarden and shot at him; but the arrow went close by the Jarl's head, and passed right through the tiller and the ropes that were wrapped about it. The Jarl looked round and asked if any knew who shot so hard? At the word, the second arrow came, and passing between his side and his arm flew through a thick board. Then the Jarl perceived whence the shot came, and said, therefore, to a notable Finlandish archer: "Shoot that long man who stands at the mast of Ormen Långä for me." As Enar stretched his bow the third time, the Fin's arrow cut through his bow-string. "What is that which exploded so loud?" asked Olof Tryggwason. "Norway out of thy hands, King!" answered Enar. "God rules for land and kingdom and not your bow," returned Olof; "take my bow and shoot with it!" and threw his bow to Enar. Enar took the bow, stretched it, and bent it up and down, saying: "Too weak, all too weak is the King's bow!" so he threw it back to Olof, and taking shield and sword, continued the battle with them as long as he was able.

Under the showers of lances and arrows from the united fleets, the men began to fall on Ormen Långä,

so that the ship was empty here and there at the sides. Then Jarl Erik, together with fifty men, leapt on board ; but when the Stambos Ulf, the Red, and Hyrning saw this, they rushed forward with some warriors from the stern, and met the Jarl so stoutly that most of his men fell, the rest were wounded, and he himself obliged to jump down backwards into his own vessel. The former fight with arrows and lances was then renewed, which caused the fall of many of the men on Ormen Länga, and finally that of the Stambos Ulf, the Red, and Hyrning, after they had long and well defended the stern. The ranks now began to be very much thinned on Ormen Länga, so that Erik with many of his men was able to gain her deck again, neither could the remaining handful of men make a sufficient resistance but retired to the stern. There stood King Olof towering above all, so that he was easily recognised and became the aim of countless arrows and lances ; but he parried them with his shield, hacked as it was with many blows. He killed many of the enemy himself by throwing spears, and it is said by all, that never did a King so valiantly expose himself to the shot of the enemy as did Olof Tryggwason on this occasion. Meanwhile, a great number of Erik's men had again got on board Ormen Länga, and were urging their way onwards towards the King. Though the remainder of Olof's men were brave and strong, they had now to do with such superior numbers that they were soon killed, and eight men only remained around the King. He then raised his shield above his head, and plunged into the sea. His men did the same, among whom were Kolbjörn Stallare, Enar Tambaskelfwer, and the King's brother, Torkel Nefia, the last who leapt overboard. They intended to save themselves by swimming, but

were prevented by Jarl Erik's boats. Those who picked up Kolbjörn were very glad, thinking they had got the King, as Kolbjörn resembled him in his figure and dress; but when he was taken to Jarl Erik, he discovered the mistake, but granted both Kolbjörn and the others their lives. King Olof Tryggwason was sought for in vain: he was never found. Some thought that exhausted by wounds he was drowned; others again say, that when Astrid, Jarl Sigwald's wife, heard of her husband's treachery towards him, she armed a little ship to his aid and lay with it at hand during the fight. When the King leapt overboard, they say that he took off his armour under the water, and afterwards swam to Astrid's vessel which took him up, and immediately sailed off. He never afterwards desired to return to Norway, but wandered southwards to Rome, and finally to Jorsala* where he lived long in a monastery. None know the full truth of this, but certain it is, that he was never more seen in the North. Queen Tyri so lamented his death, that she would neither eat nor drink, but died on the ninth day; and those of King Olof's fleet who sailed before had great remorse and repentance that they had abandoned their chief; and it was a general saying that such a King would never again reign in Norway.

CHAPTER VII.

OLOF SKÖTKONUNG'S BAPTISM.

NORWAY was now divided into three parts. Swen Tweskägg got one, Jarl Erik another, and Olof Skötkonung the third. Jarl Erik's brother, Jarl Swen, was

* Jerusalem.

married to Holmfrid, Olof Skötkonung's daughter, and was by his father-in-law appointed to rule his portion of Norway.

After the death of Ansgarius, Christianity had been neglected in Sweden, till at this time Sigfrid, a priest from York, came over and established himself at Weyiö, in Småland, beginning to preach there. Olof Skötkonung was baptized by him at Husaby Well in West Gothland A.D. 1001; and is thus the first Christian King in Sweden. As he was now unable to superintend the great sacrifice in the heathen temple of Upsala, he laid aside the title hitherto borne by his ancestors of Upsala King, and called himself Swea's King instead. He held a brilliant and magnificent Court, and was himself of a proud, selfish, and imperious disposition like his mother Sigrid Storråda. He was, however, not given to war, and permitted the enemy, without any opposition, to seize all the countries round the Gulf of Finland which his father Erik the Victorious had added to the crown of Sweden.

CHAPTER VIII.

OLOF HARALDSON.

HARALD GRENSKE, the petty King of one of the Norwegian tribes who had been burnt by Sigrid Storråda, left a son called Olof, who was baptized in his childhood and brought up in Norway. He became a very brave and sensible man, and distinguished beyond most others of his time. He was not tall, but of a very thick and strong growth, for which reason when he was older, he got the name of Olof Tjocke or the Thick. He began early the trade of arms, and his

first expedition was against Sweden, as his father had been murdered there. He overcame a Viking named Sote at Sotaskär in Södermanland, and afterwards sailed up the Norrström or Northstream into the Lake Mälär, and began to ravage its shores; but Olof Skötkonung shut up the mouth of the lake by stretching strong iron chains across the stream, between the Riddarholm (which was therefore long known by the name of Kedjeskär, or Chain Island) and Norrmalm the opposite shore, and filling it with stocks and stones so that it could not be navigated. Moreover, he sent a number of troops to watch it, intending to shut in Olof Haraldson, for at this time Lake Mälär had but one mouth. When in the autumn Olof sought to return, he found the exit closed, and heard besides that Olof Skötkonung had collected a great army to attack him, and now he thought good counsel would be precious. The water was very high in the lake, and increasing continually by heavy rains which fell at that time. Olof Haraldson then hit on the expedient of one night making his people secretly cut through a narrow neck of land between the Mälär and the sea, south of Stockholm. In the morning, he removed all the rudders from his ships, and before the Swedes could remark or prevent it, sailed with a sweeping wind through the canal and over the shallows, and so came fortunately out to sea, and continuing his depredations forced the Islanders of Gothland to pay him tribute. Olof Skötkonung was much enraged at the carelessness of his people when it was no longer time to prevent it, but from that time forth he began to entertain a great hatred for Olof Haraldson, never mentioning him but by the name of Olof Tjocke.

CHAPTER IX.

OLOF HARALDSON'S COURTSHIP.

AFTER Olof Haraldson had gained great glory and renown in other expeditions which do not regard our history, he sailed to Norway to reconquer his father's dominions. Jarl Erik had at that time died on an expedition to England, so that the chief defence of the country was gone. Many people besides disliked the land being divided between so many foreign Princes, for which reason Olof Haraldson had no difficulty in getting many adherents, and driving away the newly-appointed governors. Jarl Swen, who governed his father-in-law Olof Skötkonung's portion of Norway, was obliged to fly to Sweden with Enar Tambaskelfwer and many other men. When the King heard this, he was greatly wrath against Olof Haraldson threatening to punish him for it. "Nevertheless," added he, "it is not likely Olof the Thick will venture to attack the lands that belong to me." In this his courtiers likewise agreed, but in spite of the prediction, Olof Haraldson subdued the whole of Norway to himself, and Olof Skötkonung's threats of punishment were never put into execution. He only sent some men to Norway to exact the rates, but when these would not peaceably retrace their steps, Olof Haraldson took them up and hung them. This enraged Olof Skötkonung yet the more, and now no one at the Swedish Court dared to speak of Olof Haraldson otherwise than under the name of Olof Tjocke. The animosity of the two Kings was carried out by skirmishes and plundering on the frontiers, by which both kingdoms suffered much. The people finally interceded with their sovereigns for peace; Olof Skötkonung would not hear of it, but Olof Haraldson

formed an alliance with Jarl Ragwald in Gothland, so that there was peace between that part of Sweden and the South of Norway. Olof Haraldson then sent a message to Olof Skötkonung proposing peace, and suing for his daughter, the Princess Ingegerd, in marriage; but though the Princess herself was inclined for this, her father would not hear of either offers. Jarl Ragwald then promised to travel with Björn Stallare, Olof Haraldson's Ambassador to Upsala, and at the Allshürja-Ting seek to forward this matter. Before the Ting, however, they visited Torgny, Judge of Tjundaland, in Upland, a highly considered and respected old man, and the same who had assisted Erik Segersäll at the Battle of Fyriswall. He was now very old, and his beard so long that it covered his whole body and reached down to his knees when he sat on his judgment-seat. Björn Stallare and his companion thought they had never seen such a venerable and majestic man. Jarl Ragwald related to Torgny how all had passed, and told him of Olof Skötkonung's pride and implacability, asking Torgny's advice as to their behaviour at the Ting. Torgny was silent awhile, and finally spoke: "It is wonderful that you should wish to bear such high titles, and yet not know what course to pursue when a difficulty presents itself. Why did you promise to take this matter on yourself without reflecting that you have not power enough to venture to speak against King Olof? To me it appears better to be counted amongst the peasants as I am, and be free in word to speak what one will, even if the King himself were present. I will, however, go with you to Upsala Ting to give you succour, that you may, without fear, speak out to the King what you desire." The Jarl thanked him for this promise; after which they armed and rode together to Upsala.

CHAPTER X.

UPSALA TING.

PEOPLE from the whole kingdom were now collected in Upsala. On the one side sat Olof Skötkonung on his throne, and all his Court stood around him. On the other side sat Jarl Ragwald and Judge Torgny, and before them the Jarl's courtiers and the Judge's body-servants. Beside them on the mounds and the fields stood the people to hear what was done. When according to custom the King's affairs had been first settled, Björn Stallare arose from his seat beside the Jarl, and began to present Olof Haraldson's embassy, and speak of peace and amity between the two countries. He spoke so loud that not only the King himself, but all the people also heard every word he said. But as soon as Olof Skötkonung perceived the drift of his harangue, he rose, hastily calling out, that it was wasting words, and that that man should be silent. Björn was then obliged to cease, and to re-seat himself. Then Jarl Ragwald stood up, and set forth Olof Haraldson's proposal of peace and courtship of the Princess Ingegerd; he also spoke of how all West Gothland longed for peace, partly because the Normen robbed them of the provisions they were expecting by sea, and partly because they lived in continual fear and uncertainty by the invasions and marauding excursions which ruined their frontier. When the Jarl had made an end, the King arose again and reproached him with having concluded peace with that fat man without his consent, for which treachery he well deserved punishment. The King spoke both long and roughly, turning his speech at last with many contemptuous expressions against Olof

Haraldson. After he had done, he seated himself and a general silence followed.

Then rose Judge Torgny, and with him the whole multitude; and a great noise and uproar ensued from the people wanting to press round to hear what Torgny would say. When silence was restored, he began his speech thus :

“Swea’s Kings are different in character now to what they were in former times. My grandfather, Torgny, could well remember Erik Emundson, and related of him, how in his earliest years, he went in arms each summer round divers lands, subduing Finland, Kyrialand, Estonia, Courland, and many other countries to the eastward, and how the fortresses and other great works he had made could yet be seen. But he was not, however, so proud but that he could endure the words of those who had matters of moment to lay before him. My father, Torgny, was a long time with King Björn, and knew his mode of living well. King Björn’s kingdom stood also during his whole life-time with great might and strength, and without any deficiency, for he was friendly towards all his men. I have also a good memory of King Erik Segersäll, and have been with him on many expeditions. He increased the kingdom of Sweden, and defended it mightily; and yet it was easy for us to discourse and take council with him. But this King, whom we now have, will not permit any one to speak with him on anything but what he himself chooses, and intends with all energy to pursue. His tributaries, through feebleness and unworthiness, he permits to escape him. Nevertheless he chooses to retain the kingdom of Norway under his dominion, which no King in Sweden has ever before pretended to do; for which cause many sit in

disquietude. Now it is our, the peasants' will, that thou King Olof make peace with Olof Tjocke, the King of Norway; and that thou give him thy daughter Ingegerd to wife. And if thou shouldst wish to reconquer the countries to the east which thy friends and forefathers possessed, we will all accompany thee for that end. But if thou wilt not agree to that which we now speak, we will fall upon and kill thee, and on no account longer endure disorder and dispeace. So have our forefathers done, who at Mulating threw five Kings into a well who were puffed up with pride and vanity as thou now art. Say now immediately which of the two thou wilt accept?" The people on this made much uproar and clashing of arms; but the King arose and said, that he would give way to the will of the peasants as all the Kings of Sweden had done before him. Then the uproar ceased, and the chiefs went together and concluded peace with the Norwegian Ambassadors on the conditions which Olof Haraldson had proposed, so that the Princess Ingegerd was then promised to him.

CHAPTER XI.

OLOF SKÖTKONUNG'S FALSEHOOD.

OLOF SKÖTKONUNG had first by a concubine from Windland, a son named Emund and a daughter Astrid. He had afterwards by his Queen, a daughter, Ingegerd, and a son called Jacob at his baptism, from having been born on St. Jacob's day. The Queen could not endure her step-children, for which reason they were brought up at a distance: Emund, in Windland, and Astrid with Jarl Ragwald.

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In the spring following the reconciliation at the Upsala Ting, Olof Haraldson set out with a great suite for the frontiers, where according to agreement he was to meet his bride. But when he had long waited in vain, and the summer was far advanced, he sent messengers to Jarl Ragwald inquiring the reason of this delay. The Jarl had by that time received intimation from Upsala, that the King intended to break his promise solemnly given, and marry Ingegerd to King Jarislav in Gardarike; he therefore of his own accord sent messengers to Olof Haraldson relating this, and at the same time offering him Astrid in the place of Ingegerd. As Astrid was far renowned both for beauty, mildness, and great sense, Olof Haraldson agreed, and met the Jarl at the former rendezvous where the marriage with Astrid was celebrated without her father being consulted. This displeased him highly; but when the Princess Ingegerd set out to go to Russia, she took Jarl Ragwald with her and rescued him from her father's rage.

The people were so irritated against Olof Skötkonung on account of all these events, that a great rebellion broke out, which the King's friends could only quiet by making Jacob co-regent with his father; and as the people did not like his christian name of Jacob, he was now called Anund, which name he afterwards retained. Olof Skötkonung was forced to travel to meet Olof Haraldson and conclude peace with him; who, thus compelled, was gentle and mild in speech towards every one.

CHAPTER XII.

REBELLION AGAINST OLOF HARALDSON.

WHEN Olof Haraldson had reigned many years in Norway, the peasants began to be displeased with him because he was very severe and arbitrary in his government, and laid on heavy penalties and fines, frequently mutilating or executing those who would not embrace the Christian religion ; therefore many of the most powerful among them turned to King Knut, the Rich, (Canute) who at this time reigned over Denmark and England. He received them well, and sent besides messengers to Norway with money and presents with which the chief Normen were bribed ; so that when Canute arrived the following summer with a large fleet, the whole population joined him, and Olof Haraldson was obliged to fly the country. * He then crossed through Sweden on his way to Russia where he sought refuge with King Jarislav and Queen Ingegerd ; and Canute set Jarl Håkan as governor over Norway ; but he was drowned in the course of a year. Then some of Olof Haraldson's friends went to Russia and counselled him to return and re-conquer his former kingdom as it was without a chief. He followed their advice, and again crossed through Sweden. Olof Skötkonung was now dead, and Anund Jacob sole King. He gave Olof one hundred of his men, and permission besides to muster as many Swedes as would accompany him. Olof then passed through the province of Dalecarlia towards Trondheim, and had collected a body of three thousand men. But the peasants in Norway had also collected against him in much greater numbers. Their chief leader was Kalf Arnason, who had been before in Olof

Haraldson's service. Then there was Torer Hund, a remarkable leader amongst the peasants. Instead of armour, he wore rein-deer skin all over his body, which the people imagined was so charmed that no sword could pierce it. This Torer Hund brought with him many able-bodied men, and had vowed to fight with no one before he came to exchange blows with the King himself. Torsten Skeppsméd joined himself also to Torer to fight against King Olof, and by this means to revenge himself for the great fines the King had formerly imposed upon him.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BATTLE OF STICKLARSTAD, A.D. 1030.

THE night before the battle, the King with all his army passed on the field. It is related that night he slept little, but spent it mostly in watching and prayer to God for himself and his people. Towards morning, a light slumber came over him; but at the dawning he awoke, and as it seemed too early to call up the troops, he asked: "Where Tormoder Kolbrunar, the Bard, was?" Tormoder was close beside him, and asked what the King wanted? Olof desired him to sing a song for the troops. Tormoder then raised himself and began to sing so loud that he was heard by the whole army. The words were a *Réveillée*, and concluded by saying that "he awoke them not to the wine cups nor to the endearments of women, but to the hard game of sword and spear."

The troops awoke at this song; and as soon as Tormoder had finished, the men thanked him for his music

and praised it. The King likewise thanked him and gave him a gold ring weighing half a pound.

Olof then caused his troops to march to Sticklarstad. A man came to him there who was a head taller than all the rest, very fair to look upon, apparelled in costly garments, and carried very precious arms. He offered the King his service, saying he was from Helsingland, and was called Arnliot Gellina. The King asked if Arnliot was a Christian? He answered: "I have till now only trusted to my own strength and power, and this faith hath helped me; but now, King, I intend rather to trust to thee." The King answered: "If thou believest in me, thou must also believe in what I teach thee, that Jesus Christ has formed Heaven and earth, and all mankind, and that to him all the pious and faithful will one day come." Arnliot said: "Truly I have heard speak of the White Christ; but nothing of his power or might is known to me. Now, however, I will believe what thou sayest and let thee direct me." On this Arnliot was baptized, and set foremost in the King's army.

The King had to wait awhile with his people, for the peasants were not yet come up. He sat meanwhile and bent his head in Finn Arnason's lap, and thus a good sleep fell upon him; but when the peasant troops approached, Finn woke up the King. He was displeased at this, and said that Finn had disturbed him in a good dream. He had dreamt that he was mounting through the air on a ladder which reached to the very Heavens; but just as he was on the upper step, Finn awoke him. Finn answered: "This dream is not so good as thou mayest think, but would rather seem to bode thy death, if indeed it is anything but a deception of sleep."

The King now prepared himself, and set his people in array of battle. He was dressed himself in a shirt of mail, had a gilt helmet on his head, a halberd in one hand, and in the other a white shield with a cross inlaid in gold upon it. The man who bore the King's banner was called Torder, and a wall of the bravest men were placed around it. Within this fortress he had likewise placed the bards with orders to pay the strictest attention to what took place in the fight, that they might afterwards sing it. After this he encouraged his people to attack the peasants with violence in the beginning, and thus bring them if possible to flight. "For," said the King, "if they get time to their assistance, it is probable with their great numbers that they may vanquish us."

The whole peasant troop now advanced, and Torer Hund with his people went in front. He then gave the word to the troops, crying: "On, on, peasant men!" which cry the peasants repeated aloud, discharging their arrows, and throwing their lances at the same time. The King's men then answered this with the watchword which the King had given, viz: "On, on, Christ's men, Cross men, King's men, on, on!" and so advanced stoutly against the peasants. But when the peasants on the extreme flanks of the wings heard the shout of the King's troops, they thought it was their own, and began therefore also to cry and shout, "Christ's men, Cross men, King's men, on, on!" When the other peasants heard this, they attacked them believing them to be King's people, thus a sharp combat took place between the peasants themselves before the mistake was discovered.

King Olof had placed his people on a height, whence his men rushed down on the peasants with such vio-

lence that they began to yield, and the King's choice reserve in the centre drove the centre of the peasant army backwards. Many of them were then ready to fly; but their commanders encouraging and inciting them to bravery, got them to stand their ground and make a stout resistance; those who were in advance used their swords and axes, those who stood in the next row behind attacked with their spears, and those beyond them again shot arrows and threw lances and stones.

It is related in old chronicles, that this day was in the beginning very bright and clear, but when the fight began, a redness and a cloud drew itself over the sky; and that it afterwards became black as night which darkness continued till the King's death.

King Olof advanced from within the fortress of his banner and fought valiantly, felling many of the peasants; but these pressed violently forward so that the struggle was constantly renewed. A peasant, Torger of Qwistestad, advanced towards the King, but he gave Torger so hard a blow that he cleft his helmet and head in two. At the same moment, Torder struck the King's banner-staff with such violence into the ground that it stood fast; for Torder had now received his death-wound, and fell dead beside his banner. Many other of the King's men fell on the same spot, so that the space began to clear round King Olof. Torer Hund now advanced towards him, and they began exchanging blows; but the King's sword took no effect upon Torer, therefore he called to Björn Stallare, "Beat you the dog* since iron will not wound him!" Björn then with his hammer gave Torer a hard blow between

* Hund, Dog.

the shoulders, so that he staggered, but soon recovering himself he pointed his spear so justly that it went right through the body of Björn, saying, at the same time, "This is the way we bite the Bears.* Björn Stallare fell dead of this wound, and the King meanwhile had killed one of the peasants. At the same moment, Torsten Skeppsméd advanced on him, and gave him a blow with his axe which went deep into his left side. Finn Arnason killed Torsten Skeppsméd on the spot; but the King suffered much from his wound, bowed himself against a stone, threw away his sword, and prayed God to help him. Torer Hund came at the moment and pierced him with his lance, so that the King fell down and died. By this time, the greater number of those who had advanced with him had fallen around him. A part of his troops which had come up too late, now attacked the peasants and recommenced a more violent fight than before; but when they heard that the King was dead, they lost all hope, and turning, some fled towards Sweden, while others sought protection with friends and relations in Norway.

CHAPTER XIV.

TORMODER KOLBRUNAR-SKALD'S DEATH.

TORMODER had been in the battle among the Bards round King Olof's banner. When the peasants made their first attack, he was so badly wounded that he was not able to wield his arms. An arrow came and flew deep into his left side. Tormoder broke off the arrow-head in the wound, and went afterwards to a large

* Björn, Bear.

house in which the wounded were collected. A man called Kimbe met him there. Kimbe said, "Here is a most deplorable noise, and it is a great shame that strong men cannot better bear their wounds." Then observing on Tormoder's arm the ring which the King had given him in the morning, he said to him: "Thou art very surely a King's man; but give me thy ring, and I shall hide thee out of the way of the peasants." Tormoder answered: "Take the ring if thou canst, for I have lost more now than it is worth!" Tormoder bore his naked sword in his hand, and as Kimbe stretched forth his hand for the ring, he swung his sword and cut off the hand; and it is said that Kimbe groaned as much from the pain of his wound, as did those whom he had mocked before. Tormoder entered a cottage where a woman was busied in tending the wounded. She begged him to carry in wood to lay on the fire; he did so, but when he advanced in the fire-light, the woman said: "This man is very pale—whence comes it?" Tormoder answered in verse:

"Thou wonderest, woman, to see me so pale. Wounds make few beautiful, and I have met the flying arrow. The grinding brass went through me, and the sharp iron sits in my heart."

The women said: "Let me see thy wounds, and I shall bind them." He sat down, and, throwing off his armour, let her examine them. She offered him a draught to drink which was composed of leeks, and other herbs, but he said, "Take it away again; drugs cannot cure me!" She then tried with pincers to draw out the iron; but she could not, neither could she get a good hold of it, for the wound was much swelled. Tormoder said: "Cut the flesh first from round the iron that it can be got at with the tongs, and then let

me pull it out." This done, he drew the ring off his arm and giving it to the woman, said: "Do with it what thou wilt; but truly a good man owned it, for King Olof gave it to me this morning." Then he grasped the tongs and wrenched out the arrow-head. But there were hooks and barbs on the iron on which pieces of his heart came out, some red, and some white. Tormoder looked at them, and said: "Well did the King feed us; fat are my heart's roots;" fell down to the earth with these words, and was dead.

CHAPTER XV.

THE EXTINCTION OF THE IWAR DYNASTY. A.D. 1061.

OLOF HARALDSON was afterwards worshipped as a saint, and the monks have related many miracles which he is said to have worked. After Anund Jacob, his elder brother Emund the Old reigned, who died without sons, and was thus the last King in Sweden of Iwar Widfamnes' race.

END OF PART I.

Part II.**THE CATHOLIC PERIOD.****BOOK I.****OF THE STENKIL DYNASTY.**

CHAPTER I.**KING STENKIL.**

AFTER the extinction of the Iwarska dynasty by the death of Emund the Old, A.D. 1061. Jarl Stenkil succeeded him, and became the founder of a new dynasty. This Stenkil was of high descent, being the son of Jarl Ragwald Ulfson, and great grandson of Skoglar Toste. His mother descended from the Ynglingar race, and was after the death of Jarl Ragwald married to Emund the Old, so that Stenkil became that King's step-son. Stenkil himself was a remarkably tall and very strong man; no one in the whole kingdom could shoot so well with the bow as he. He was bold and undaunted in fight; but also of a mild, prudent, and peaceful character; he was moreover renowned for his justice in council, though he was accounted to have favoured the West Gothlanders beyond any other of his subjects; because his father's family had their origin in that province.

CHAPTER II.

THE PREACHING OF CHRISTIANITY.

King Stenkil had himself embraced Christianity, and favouring it much in his time, it was widely preached throughout Sweden. St. David in Munktorp preached to the Westmanlanders; St. Adalward, the elder, was Bishop in Skara, and converted the Wermlanders; St. Stephen went towards Norrland, preached there and converted the Helsingars; but as he conducted himself violently, tearing down and destroying the idols, he was at last murdered by the heathen at Mordback in Tynnebro Forest between Gestrikeland and Helsingland. He was buried in Norrala Church, and the peasantry there still sing many songs about him under the name of Stephen Stalldräng, or Hillebror Staffan. Adalward, the younger, was ordained by the Archbishop of Bremen, Bishop of Sigtuna, where he had so much success in the beginning of his ministration, that he got at one mass seventy marks* of silver at the collection. But Bishop Egino was the most celebrated of them all. Two Bishoprics were founded in Skåne at this time: the one in Dalby, the other in Lund. Egino was the first Bishop of Dalby, and Henrik of Lund. This Henrik had before been the chaplain of the Kings of Denmark and having collected great riches, when he became Bishop lived in luxury and idleness. He died at last of excess in drinking, and Egino was then appointed Bishop both of Lund and Dalby. He was a zealous and pious man, and converted the heathen in Bleking and Bornholm, preaching to them so earnestly, that with tears of remorse for their former errors, they broke their idols, and brought him all their gold and

* A mark, eight ounces of gold or silver.

silver. He did not accept it, but bade them employ it for the building of Churches, providing for the poor, and ransoming the prisoners who had been taken by the Vikings in their expeditions. To make an end of the heathen idolatry in the land, he entered at last into an agreement with Adalward, the younger, in Sigtuna, to burn the great Temple of Upsala. They communicated their plan to King Stenkil, who advised them against it, saying the Pagans, irritated in consequence, would kill the Christian teachers, drive himself away, and force those who had already embraced Christianity to return to the worship of idols. By this means their intention of firing the temple was not carried into execution; but the heathens, who had heard of the plan, were highly incensed at it, and after the death of Stenkil broke into a rebellion, in which all the Christians in the country suffered much, and Adalward was obliged to fly to West Gothland, which he afterwards left for Bremen. Egino, however, continued his preaching boldly, made occasional excursions to West Gothland, encouraging the Christians there, who were without a preacher, as their Bishops, Acilius and Tadicus, who had been appointed by the Pope, preferred living in ease and profusion in their Monasteries in Germany to exposing themselves to the troubles and dangers attendant upon the dissemination of Christianity in a heathen country. But Egino was never appalled; he even broke an image of Frigga at one place in West Gothland, and continued preaching boldly everywhere til his death.

In this manner the Christian religion became gradually known throughout the whole kingdom, and many miracles are related of the Christian teachers. St. David is said once to have hung up his gloves on a sunbeam, which, his eyes being weakened by age and weeping,

he took for a nail, and where his servants, who came afterwards to seek for them, found them still hanging. Adalward, the elder, was said to get rain and sunshine from God whenever he prayed for them; and the West Gotha peasantry were much devoted to him.

St. Botwid was born of heathen parents in Hammarby, near Stockholm; but on a commercial voyage to England, he was converted to Christianity which he afterwards preached in his native place. He wished once to drag his net on his neighbour Bowe's shore, but Bowe refused unless the half of the draught was allotted to him. Botwid then removed to his own shore, where after fervent prayers he is said to have got his whole net full of fishes, which he divided freely amongst those who had meanwhile dragged their nets in vain on the opposite side. Neither was he angry with Bowe for his avarice, but wished him all that was good; and by his gentleness was much loved, and had great success in his ministry. He had ransomed and baptised a Russian slave, whom he intended to send back to his own country; but when stopping at Räg Island in Lake Mälar, when St. Botwid had fallen asleep under a tree, he was murdered by this man. When his relations missed him, they took ship and began seeking for him in every direction. It is said that a white bird set itself on the prow of their vessel, and as it were showed them the way. They followed this guide, and thus found the place where the murdered Botwid lay. They carried him home with them, and as he was afterwards considered a saint, a Church was erected over his grave which in honour of him was called Botwid's or Bot Church.

It is also said that Bishop Adalward converted a shepherd boy of the name of Torsten who served a peasant in West Gothland. When Torsten afterwards

tended the peasant's cattle in the woods, he occupied himself the whole day with serious contemplations and prayers before a great stone in place of an altar, permitting the cattle meanwhile to wander untended through the wood. Nevertheless they assembled each evening of their own accord, and none of them was ever missing. The peasant who was a heathen hated Torsten for his Christianity, and when he could find no other cause of complaint against him, crept secretly into the wood, and bound one of the oxen to a tree. As this animal was wanting at night, the peasant accused the lad, and as a punishment for the crime he had invented against him had him sacrificed on the same stone where he had held his solitary devotions. But from this time forth, the peasant's animals began to pine, grew thin, and died, and many thought that this was a punishment for the death of the innocent. Once as the man had killed an ox, and had already drawn off the hide, his wife began again to lament over Torsten's death, saying, that he was a saint who now dwelt in Heaven. The peasant laughed aloud at this, saying : " I no more believe Torsten to be alive now than this ox which I am hewing asunder." But behold ! at these words the killed and flayed ox raised himself suddenly on his four legs, thus to the astonishment of all beholders bearing witness to the sanctity of its former guardian. A little chapel was afterwards erected on this spot to Torsten's honour, where many miracles are said to have been performed, especially upon the sick cattle of the West Gothland peasantry.

These, and numberless other stories of this kind which the ignorant people believed, conduced, in a certain degree, to procure greater reverence for Christianity, and exclude the still more absurd legends of the ancient Mythology.

CHAPTER III.

WAR AGAINST NORWAY.

At this time a famous chief named Ilåkan lived in Norway. He was considered as brave and able as any man, and had therefore been set over a part of the west of Norway, and married to one of the King's relations. He afterwards fell into disgrace with his own King, Harald Hårdråde, and being obliged to fly, afterwards got a command in Sweden, some say of Halland, others of Wernland, whence he often went into Norway and collected the revenues of his former fief, the peasants preferring paying to him whom they loved than to Harald Hårdråde. The King was displeased at this, and putting his troops on board light vessels ascended the Gota-elf, causing the ships to be carried past the great water-falls at Trollhätta, Edet and Rånum, and in this manner they entered Lake Wenern. He here intended breaking into West Gothland, but Jarl Ilåkan met him with an army, and numbers of the peasantry determined to prevent Harald from plundering. Both armies stood on a height, and a morass lying between; neither was disposed to make the first attack. Judge Torwid, who headed the West Gothlanders, sat before them on a horse which was bound to a pole stuck into the ground. While waiting the commencement of the fray, he encouraged his men with these words: "God knows that we have here collected a great body together, and the greater part of them are able men. Let King Stenkil then hear that we have been a stout help to this Jarl. But should any of our young men be afraid and not dare to abide, we shall not fly further than to that stream yonder; if more of the youths should fear,

which I do not believe, we will fly no farther than to yonder height."

The Norwegian army now set up their war-shout, and struck upon their shields which the Swedes answered in like manner. The Judge's horse was so terrified at this that he reared suddenly, and wrenched out the pole so violently that it struck the Judge on the head. He, believing it to be a Norwegian shot, "cursed their shooting," and made off with himself both beyond the stream and the mound. The Gothamen had been summoned in haste, and were therefore so ill-provided with clothes that they were shivering with cold, the autumn being already advanced, and some snow falling, therefore they did not choose to wait longer, but rushed across the valley and up the other height attacking the Normen. But these repulsed them stoutly, and though they did not venture to follow them far, they cut down great numbers and got possession of Jarl Hakan's banner.

When the Normen returned in the evening to their ships, they were passing through so narrow a path in the wood that they could only advance one by one. Just as the King was asking those nearest him if Jarl Håkan had fallen in the battle, he was told that a man had rushed out of the forest, cut down the man who was carrying Håkan's banner, and made off with it. Then said Harald: "Håkan Jarl is yet alive!" Harald had no success in West Gothland after this, for as soon as any of his men wandered from the main body, they were soon surrounded and killed by hidden enemies. It is even related that Håkan himself, disguised as an old beggar, presented himself in Harald's camp, and offered to guide them to Håkan Jarl's hiding place. Many accompanied him whom he conducted into a

thick large wood, where they were presently attacked and cut down by an ambuscade. Lastly, Lake Wenern began to freeze, and it was rumoured that King Stenkil was leading a great army from the north to Häkan's assistance. Harald, therefore, descended Gotha-elf on his way back to Norway as he had mounted it, and West Gothland was afterwards free from his attacks.

CHAPTER IV.

OF KING INGE THE ELDER.

KING STENKIL left two sons, Inge and Halstan at his death in 1066; as they were both very young, Häkan Rufus was named King. Not much is to be said of him; and at his death in 1079, Inge became King. He was a tall and strong man like his father Stenkil. His Queen whose name was Mö was of a high family, and her brother Swen stood in high favour at Court.

This Inge was a very zealous and ardent Christian. Like the Kings, his predecessors, he did not choose to dwell at Upsala on account of the many heathen sacrifices held there, but preferred to live at Björkö or Sigtuna. The former Kings had however almost all of them attended the great yearly sacrifices in Upsala, which King Inge would by no means do. On the contrary, he sought to prevent the worship of idols as much as he could, and ordered his people to embrace Christianity. The heathens, much irritated at this, appointed a meeting with the King at a Ting, when they offered him two conditions, either that he should remain faithful to the old law and customs of the country as his father King Stenkil had done, or else renounce the throne. But King Inge answered boldly,

that he would never abandon the faith and doctrine which he considered the best. The peasants then became angry, and commenced with shouts and cries to throw stones upon him driving him by this means away from the Ting.

CHAPTER V.

BLOT SWEN.

WHEN King Inge was obliged to fly from Upsala, his brother-in-law, Swen, remained there still, and presenting himself before the enraged peasantry promised to retain the sacrifice for them, if they would take him for their King. To this they agreed; and so Swen became King over Swea land, and Inge was obliged to fly to West Gothland. Swen caused a horse immediately to be lead out which was hewn in pieces as a sacrifice, and divided amongst the people; and with the blood, the idols were besmeared as was the custom of the heathen.

Shortly after they collected at Strengnäs, which was at that time a place of general meeting for sacrifice. There they were to render homage to Swen, and a great sacrifice was appointed at the same time. In Södermanland by Fors, where Eskilstuna is now situated, lived at that time a Christian teacher from England of the name of Eskil, who was very zealous and eager in the conversion of the heathen. When he received news of the great sacrifice that was to be held in Strengnäs, he hastened thither and arrived as the heathens were in the very midst of their sacrifice, and a great feast was in readiness for the people on the spot where Strengnäs Cathedral now stands. When

Eskil saw this, he began violently to reproach them for forgetting the only true God, and sacrificing to devils but as they paid no attention to this, and much more that he said, he lifted his hands and eyes towards Heaven, and prayed that God would by some miracle show his power to the unbelievers. It is then related that a loud clap of thunder accompanied by heavy rain, snow and hail, burst over head beating down the Pagan altars, and sweeping away their sacrifices; but no single drop fell upon Eskil. This more angered than frightened the multitude, and one of their priests threw a stone at Eskil; another wounded him with a sword, on which he was carried before Swen who condemned him to death for having, by witchcraft, caused the storm to the dishonour of the Gods and the King. He was then conveyed out of the town, and killed on a hill where a Dominican Cloister was afterwards erected to his honour. The monks further relate, that a burning light came down from Heaven on his body, and that the spots of his blood could never be washed from the stone on which he stood when he was first wounded. Some Christians took St. Eskil's body with the intention of carrying him to Fors where he had before lived; however before they had quite reached the place, they were surrounded by such a thick mist that they could not see to advance a step further, and the body became so heavy that they had no power to lift it. They thought this was to make them understand the saint's desire to be buried in the same spot. A Church was afterwards founded to his honour, and there a town is still called Eskilstuna, *i. e.* Eskil's home. •

During this time, Christianity was rooted out in many parts of Sweden, and the heathen ceremonies

celebrated with their former magnificence. This was particularly the case in the great Temple of Upsala. Its exterior was of coarse granite, but the interior was entirely covered with plates of gold. Within stood the images of Odin, Thor and Frey beside one another; and the people offered cocks, hawks, dogs, and horses to them, and in times of distress even men. The victims were always of the male sex. The sacrifice was accompanied by the awful songs of the priests; and the dead bodies of the animals, which were not consumed during the sacrificial feast, were hung up in the trees of the great grove which surrounded the temple. This grove was considered very holy by the heathen, and more than fifty dead bodies were to be seen sometimes hanging at a time, especially at the great sacrifice which took place every ninth year, in which they offered nine males of every sort of animal. The directing such sacrifices to idols was in the old language called *blota*, whence Swen received the surname of Blot Swen, because he revived these heathen services.

CHAPTER VI.

BLOT SWEN'S DEATH.

BLOT SWEN reigned three years in North Sweden, and during that time, King Inge lived in West Gothland where Christianity was better known. He at last collected a small army with great secrecy, with which he rode northwards night and day till he reached the house in which King Blot Swen was one morning early, while he and his Court were yet sleeping. Inge caused his men to surround it, barred the doors, and set fire to it. Blot Swen succeeded in forcing himself through

the flames, but was immediately attacked and hewn down by Inge's people, and his men were either burnt to death or killed.

Inge regained his kingdom after this; and some say that for the complete extirpation of Paganism, he caused the ancient temple at Upsala to be burnt, and the sacred grove round it to be cut down. It is certain that the temple was so destroyed that the walls alone remained, which were afterwards repaired and extended by Swerker, the elder, and finally by St. Erik who rebuilt it as the Christian Church which is now called Old Upsala, and in whose walls it is still possible to trace the rude masonry which formerly belonged to the idol temple.

Inge now caused Christianity to be proclaimed all over his dominions, in which it was introduced partly by force and partly by gentle means. The heathen withdrew to East Gothland and Småland where they chose for their King, Erick Blot, Swen's son who presided at the sacrifices for them. A man called Kettill, the Unbeliever, because he would not receive the new faith, lived also in that part of the country at that time. He had been Hákan Rufus Jarl and was very old, when with anger and disgust, at the progress of Christianity, he caused a great mound to be thrown up which he entered, and in which he lived three years till his death. This mound may still be seen near Kettilstad Church which got its name from him.

Distinguished families have their origin from Blot Swen. His son Erik was ancestor of the Swerker dynasty; his daughter Cecilia was married to Jedward Bonde, and was mother of St. Erik, from whom descended the Erik dynasty.

CHAPTER VII.

WAR WITH NORWAY.

At this time reigned in Norway, Magnus, surnamed Barfot, because he had introduced the custom from southern countries of wearing short cloaks and bare legs. He was very ambitious, and being much given to war determined on adding the provinces lying west of Gotha-elf and Lake Wenern to the crown of Norway. Bohuslän was at that time called Wikeu, and its inhabitants, who were accounted a very stiff and unmanageable people, had always been subject to the Norwegian Kings; but the Markamen, or Dalmen (for Dalecarlia was then called the Marks) had always paid tribute to the Swedish Kings, and intended to continue the same. Magnus Barfot then led his army from Bohuslän through Dal plundering and ravaging every where, and compelling the people to submit; but by the time he had reached Lake Wenern, the autumn was already far advanced for which reason he caused a fortress of wood and turf to be built on Rallands Island, as it is now called, supplying it with provisions and all necessaries, and digging a broad and deep trench round it, left it with a garrison of three hundred men under command of S'gurd Ullsträng, while he retired himself towards Norway.

When King Inge heard this, he began, though very slowly, to collect his forces; and when the Lake was frozen arrived with three thousand men, and sent a message to Sigurd Ullsträng begging him to return home again with his people, their arms and all the spoil they had taken. But Sigurd arrogantly replied, that King Inge should find the dislodging them other

sort of work than turning deer out of a park. The King therefore advanced upon the island, and sent a second message desiring the Normen now to depart with their weapons and horses, but leave their treasures behind them. He however received a second refusal; on which he with his men assaulted the castle. They filled the ditch with stones and trees, and battered the wall with great beams which at last began to give way, and throwing flaming torches into the castle succeeded in setting it on fire. The Norwegians now demanded peace, and though King Inge might have cut them down to a man, he granted them quarter; but their weapons, horses, and all they had plundered was to be left behind. As they went out of the fortress unarmed, each got a stroke of a rod across the thighs, so that they carried back to Norway the fame of a very disgraceful expedition; and the Marks returned to their dependance on King Inge, and remained subject to him.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FIGHT AT FOXERNA.

WHEN King Magnus heard of the disaster of his men at Rällands Island, he was highly enraged and determined to avenge this affront. He therefore ascended the river (Gotha-elf) early next spring with his ships, plundering all West Gothland as far as Foxerna Church, where his men left their ships to go further into the interior of the country; but it was not long before they met a great body of Gotha people assembled with whom they engaged in a severe fight. The Normen were finally obliged to take flight, and the enemy followed them over a vast plain keeping in

strict pursuit of King Magnus, who was recognisable by his great height and a red mantle which he wore over his armour. A Norwegian named Ogmund Skofteson, who was also very tall, rode beside the King; perceiving the intention of the enemy and the King's danger, he asked as a grace to get the red cloak; and when they were behind some rocks and trees which hid them from sight, they exchanged mantles. Again appearing on the plain, Ogmund turned right off from the road the King was following, and the whole troop rushed on his traces. He was thus exposed to many dangers before he got rid of his pursuers and back to the ships, while it was easy for Magnus to make his escape, who returned to his own country well-determined to pay back the affronts himself and his people had received.

He collected a new army and again ascended the river, compelling many West Gothlanders to accompany him. King Inge advanced against him with a great army and encamped at Foxerna, where King Magnus fell upon him unexpectedly at night killed many of his people, and finally obliged him to fly; after which he returned to Norway well satisfied with his success.

CHAPTER IX.

RECONCILIATION OF THE KINGS.

THE following summer a meeting was appointed in Kongahäll or Kong-elf, as the town is now called, between the Kings Inge and Magnus, and King Erik Ejegod of Denmark, who came there to settle their difficulties. When the Ting was assembled, the three Kings walked out on the plain apart from the people

discoursing together. In a while they returned, and peace was concluded between them on the conditions that the boundaries of the kingdoms should remain as they had formerly been, and that each King should make up to his subjects what they had suffered from the ravages of the war. As a further confirmation of this peace, King Magnus was to marry King Inge's daughter Margaret; and she was therefore called Margaretha Fridkulla. But the people thought they had never seen three such remarkable men as Kings. Inge was allowed to be the strongest and manliest; Magnus the most active and agile, but King Erik was the handsomest.

King Inge had peace after this as long as he lived. His brother Halstan was for a time co-regent; but he soon died leaving two sons, Philip and Inge. When Inge, the elder, died (1112) he left no sons, and was succeeded by his two nephews as co-regents.

CHAPTER X.

KING INGE THE YOUNGER.

PHILIP died in a short time (1118), and Inge then reigned alone. He was much devoted to the Christian faith, and very mild and pious; fasted, read prayers, and masses at fixed seasons, but did not sufficiently protect his kingdom against foreign attacks. Two brothers, Østen and Sigurd, reigned in Norway at this time. The latter with a chosen troop travelled to Jerusalem, bathed in the river Jordan, and performed many valiant actions on this expedition whence he gained the name of Jorsalafarare, or Traveller to

Jerusalem; for Jerusalem was then called Jorsala by the Northern nations.

While Sigurd was on his travels, Östen sat at home governing his kingdom with such wisdom that it rose to great power, and he was greatly beloved by all. He sent many presents to the inhabitants of Jemtland, thus gaining their devotion; and finally summoning them together represented to them how much better it would be for them to belong to Norway than to Sweden. It was easier for them to get their provisions from Norway, neither was it so great a trouble for them to go to Trondheim as to travel to Upsala when they had any thing to solicit from their King. The Jemtlanders approved of King Östen's speech, and knowing him to be a sensible and active Prince they submitted, paying their contributions to him henceforth, which King Inge was not able to prevent even if he had wished it.

When King Sigurd Jorsalafarare, after the death of Östen, became sole King in Norway, he determined to extirpate Paganism in Småland and Öster-Gothland. He therefore sailed with a great fleet through the Sound and landed at Calmar, there commencing his depredations and not ceasing till the Smålanders had given him fifteen hundred head of cattle, and had accepted the Christian religion, on which he returned to Norway. It is not mentioned any where that King Inge sought to repel or punish this invasion, and his power within the kingdom was very small.

The son of Blot Swen reigned over the heathen in East Gothland as has been already said. There were always good harvests during his reign, for which reason his subjects called him Erik Årsäll, or (Year blest) and put yet more confidence in the power of their ancient

divinities; however he with his whole family embraced Christianity before his death, and thus Paganism lost its last support, and Christianity became universal throughout the kingdom.

King Inge, the younger, died of poison in 1129, and left no children.

CHAPTER XI.

STRIFE FOR THE SUCCESSION.

FROM the remotest times, the Swedes of the northern provinces had always had a right to choose a King for the whole nation, who when he was elected was obliged to hold his Eriksgata,* give hostages for himself at the frontiers of each province, and afterwards at the provincial Ting swear to protect the laws. The other provinces envied the Upper-Swedes this privilege, and the West Gothlanders in particular had long been annoyed at it. As the Kings of the Stenkil dynasty were all of West Gothland origin, their countrymen imagined they might now have a voice in the election. They therefore assembled, and named the Danish Prince, Magnus Nilsson, son of Margaretha Fridkulla, and King Nils to whom she had been married after the death of Magnus Barfot.

The Upper-Swedes enraged at the impertinence of the West Gothlanders did not choose to renounce their rights, and elected on their side another King. He was called Ragwald, and some say he was of the Stenkil dynasty. He was very tall and strong, but passionate and violent in character, for which reason he is

* Eriksgata signifies the journey through the whole kingdom which the Swedish monarchs yet perform on their accession to the throne.

supposed to have been surnamed Knaphöfde, or Short-head.

Ragwald Knaphöfde immediately commenced his Eriksgata ; but when he came to the frontiers of West Gothland, not choosing to give hostages, he entered the province without the consent of the inhabitants. They therefore collected against him at Karlaby Länga, not far from Falköping, and killed him (1131). It is said that his grave is yet to be seen there.

Magnus Nilsson committed meanwhile a base and cowardly action in Denmark, when by flattery and professions of friendship, he got his nephew, Duke Knut Laward, into his power and afterwards secretly murdered him that he might be certain of the Danish throne on his father, King Nils' death. After the commission of this crime, he became generally known as a harsh and evil Prince, and though the West Gothlanders still adhered to him, the Swedes elected for their King a son of Erik Ärsäll, Swerker by name, who had inherited East Gothland from his father and embraced Christianity. As Knut Laward had been much loved in Denmark, a rebellion broke out against King Nils and his son in which Erik Emund, brother of the murdered Prince, fought long with various success, till at last Magnus, determined to destroy his power at a blow, collected twenty thousand men from Jutland and the islands with which he marched against his nephew who was only possessed of Hålland and Skåne. That no rumour of his motions might spread, he caused all the eastern coasts of Zealand to be carefully watched ; but Magnus Saxeson, one of Erik's men, lowered himself down one night by a rope from Stewen's Klint into a boat in which he rowed across the Straits, and informed Erik of the danger that threatened him. Some

time after the whole Danish fleet anchored off Fotewick not far from Skanör ; and Magnus landed his men immediately arranging them in no particular order for he despised Erik's power. Five Bishops and many priests were in Magnus's company, and as it was precisely Easter, the Bishops counselled the Prince not to break the Sabbath by fighting a battle. But Magnus treated their words with contempt, and when his men seemed downcast, encouraged them by saying : " Why fear ye, my brave men ? Are we not twenty thousand armed men, with whom we could take even Rome itself ? " But they remained dispirited.

Archbishop Asker of Lund was with Erik Emund, animating his troops by representing to them, " That weak and cowardly men are not agreeable in the eyes of God ; that all must die once, while he who now fought manfully might be assured of the full forgiveness of his sins." And even desired his priests to walk through the lines pronouncing absolution. Erik next addressed them, reminding them of " how cruelly King Nils and Prince Magnus had murdered his brother, Knut Laward as well as the rest of their ill-deeds which should now meet with their deserts." The whole army exclaimed that they would live and die with Erik, and advanced boldly against Magnus, having their cavalry in advance. The Danish army stood near the village of Hammar above Fotewik ; as soon as they saw the dust and heard the rush of the Scänian cavalry, they began to fly back to their ships, and by the time the cavalry did come up, the Danish lines were already in disorder and easily routed. King Nils was slightly wounded, and was helped by a peasant to a horse with which he escaped to the fleet ; but Prince Magnus, who was dressed in a black coat of mail, held good his

ground encouraging the people round him to resistance, so that an obstinate fight was kept up where he stood. His standard-bearer was called Sigurd Starke, and his foster-brother was a very stout warrior. He and Magnus, together with Bishop Peder of Roskild, kept up the battle long; but when Sigurd saw that they must be vanquished, he threw away the banner, and as Prince Magnus would not fly of his own accord, caught him up in his arms and hurried away with him towards the ships. But Erik's men cut off their retreat, so that they both perished at last (1134). The flying Danes crowded in such numbers into some vessels that they sunk, which, when the people on board the others saw, they would not permit a greater number than they already had to enter. A crowd of Danes, pursued by the Scänians, rushed into the water, and caught hold of the sides of their countrymen's ships hoping for safety; but those on board pitilessly cut off their hands and arms, in which way many were lost, besides the numbers who fell in the battle, amongst whom were five Bishops, and more than fifty priests who had accompanied Prince Magnus.

King Nils fled back to Denmark, and was soon afterwards murdered at Schleswig by the burghers, who hated him because he had not punished Knut Laward's death. Erik succeeded him as King of Denmark; and as Magnus was fallen, Swerker was acknowledged King over all Sweden, founding a new dynasty which was called after him, the Swerkerska.

BOOK II.

THE SWERKER AND ERIK DYNASTIES.

CHAPTER I.

KING SWERKER, THE ELDER.

KING SWERKER was of a very mild and pious character, and much devoted to the Christian religion. He founded many of the oldest monasteries which were known in Sweden, as Nydala in Småland, Warnhem* in West Gothland, Alvastr† in East Gothland, &c. and built many Churches besides throughout the kingdom.

Cardinal Nicolas Albanensis came, in his time, to Linköping, and held the first Synod in Sweden (A. D. 1153). At this meeting, the first tax Sweden had ever paid the Pope was imposed under the name of St. Peter's Penning. Carrying arms was at the same time forbidden to all except the King's body-guard. The Cardinal was to have founded an Archbishopric in the kingdom; which was, however, not carried into execution on account of internal dissensions. The Swedes desired that the See should be at Upsala, while the Goths insisted upon its being at Linköping.

From this period, Christianity may be said to have

* That is Bernard's home, for the monks of St. Bernard lived there.

† That is Alfild's-stad (town), for the monastery was founded upon property belonging to Alfild, Swerker's Queen.

been established in Sweden. Together with the annual sacrifices in the Temple of Upsala, the Allshärja Ting was also abolished, so that the peasants were deprived of further participation in the government. By this means, and by the proclamation against bearing arms, they gradually lost their former consideration, and the Bishops and other great lords settled all the affairs of the kingdom at the meetings which were called Herredagar or Diets.

CHAPTER II.

WAR WITH DENMARK.

THE Danish King Swen Grate had placed a man named Karl as governor in his province of Halland in the south of Sweden. This Karl had a wife and a sister-in-law who were both famed for their beauty. Prince John, King Swerker's son, conceived an unlawful passion for these women, and during Karl's absence carried them off to his castles in Sweden, treating them in the most disgraceful manner. When his father and the people caused their common detestation of his crime to be known, he restored them to their home; but was so abhorred by the peasantry that when he assembled them at a Ting to ask their assistance against the Danes, they fell upon and slew him.

But King Swen Grate, however, considered this as an outrage put upon the whole Danish nation, and one for which it was incumbent on him to take ample vengeance. He, therefore, commenced his preparations against Sweden, and could not be turned from his intentions either by King Swerker's many messages, begging for peace and reconciliation or by the entrea-

ties of Cardinal Nicolai, who represented to him the small advantage and many miseries which awaited him in so poor and miserable a country as Sweden. Swen Grate depended too much on the good fortune he had already enjoyed to pay much attention to these warnings of the Cardinal. Considering Swerker's embassies as a proof of fear and weakness, he only became the more eager in his undertaking, and even commenced distributing amongst his men the jarldoms and governments he had yet to conquer in Sweden. A dispute between two of his courtiers arose regarding a Swedish maiden, who at that time was renowned for her beauty all over the north, which the King settled by promising that she should be the reward of him who conducted himself with the most bravery in the war on which they were about to enter. With these preparations they awaited the winter, when they could penetrate into the country with the greatest facility over its frozen lakes and rivers.

King Swerker was now so much reduced by old age and infirmity, that he took no means of defence against this invasion, and permitted the Danish army without the least opposition to break into the province of Småland from that of Skåne in the winter of 1154. They first traversed that portion of the former province then known under the name of Finnweden, the inhabitants everywhere paying homage to the Danish monarch and supplying him with provisions. He then entered Wärend Härad burning and destroying everything as the people had fled into the woods. Meantime the winter had set in with great violence much to the discomfiture of the Danes, whose progress was stopped by the snow. One day as the King was sitting at table in his tent, he was informed that the peasants had entirely shut up the road by means of a barricade.

He started up in wrath and rode to the place commanding his men to storm the barricade. A crowd of peasants stood behind, who with loud cries begged the King for peace, but he was not to be moved; they were therefore obliged to defend themselves, and succeeded till evening in repelling the attack of the Danes. The army meanwhile had suffered much from the severity of the season; numbers of horses had been destroyed, and the men besides began to grow weary of the war and desert in parties for their homes, so that the forces were much weakened. Swen, therefore, with one division of his troops suddenly retreated by back roads into Skåne, while the other under command of Karl was to regain Halland. These were well received by the peasantry of Småland who furnished them with meat and drink. When Karl had been one evening feasted in this manner, he and his intoxicated companions were conducted to an empty barn to pass the night. As soon as they had fallen asleep, the Smålanders shut the doors, and then set fire to the barn at its four corners. As the fire grew stronger, Karl and his party awoke, and finally succeeded in bursting the door; but drunk and unarmed as they were, were easily cut down by the Smålanders, and a few of those who had been taken prisoners were mercilessly thrust under the ice on Nissa river, thus meeting their death.

By this and various other means, the Danes were expelled by the inhabitants of the district of Wärend, in which feats the women are said to have given their husbands signal and valiant assistance. The inhabitants have received divers privileges as a reward for their bravery, and the women the right of inheriting an equal portion with the men as well as of having trumpets blown before them in their nuptial processions.

Shortly after it happened that as King Swerker was

on the road from Alebäck to Tollstads Church to attend the early service of Christmas morning, 1155, he was murdered by his groom. A stone was put up in memory of the murder which has only lately been removed. This crime is thought to have been instigated by the Danish Prince Magnus Henrikson, who, as great grandson of King Inge, the elder, imagined himself rightful heir of the Swedish crown. King Swerker was buried in Alvastra convent.

CHAPTER III.

OF KING ERIK THE HOLY.

AFTER the death of Swerker, enmity again broke out between the two rival portions of Sweden as to which of them should nominate the King. Neither of them would have Magnus Henrikson; but the Goths chose Charles, the son of King Swerker; and the Up-Swedes chose a Swedish man, Erik, son of Jedward Tordson Bonde of Engsö and Cecilia, daughter of Blot Swen. This Erik was very mild, pious, generous, humble, wise and brave, and was therefore much loved by his subjects and honoured by the clergy. He fasted often to mortify his flesh, bathed in ice-cold water, and wore hair cloth next his skin. He built many of the smaller granite Churches which are to be seen all over Sweden, and it is thought that what is called the Peasant Church in Upsala was built by him. He used also often to travel round his kingdom, and adjust the differences and disputes among the people; but when he could not succeed in reconciling the parties, he pronounced between them; and his judgment was known to be right, for he never showed

respect of persons. He was always found to protect the poor against the oppressions of the rich, and when any of his subjects through gratitude offered him increased taxes, he refused them, saying, "I have enough of my own, keep yours: perhaps some day you may come to want it."

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CHAPTER IV.

WAR IN FINLAND.

THE manners and morals of the Swedes had by this time in some degree become civilized by Christianity. The slaves taken in war were no longer so harshly treated being also Christians. The arts of reading and writing as they were then known were introduced by the monks; commerce began to be carried on in the towns protected by the Church, and agriculture to be attended to since the former plundering piracies of the Vikings had entirely ceased. But the Finns who dwelt on the other side of the Baltic, and the Esthonians who were still heathens continually disturbed the Swedish coast. These Erik determined to conquer and convert, as well that he might be in peace for them in future, as because the Pope had solemnly enjoined crusades against the heathen as a work very pleasing in the sight of God. Bishop Henrik of Upsala, a brave man, animated the King in these intentions; he even collected a great force consisting of a number of Helsinglanders under the command of Fale Bure, the elder. When Erik by his Ambassadors had at first exhorted the Finns to embrace Christianity and submit, he sailed over and landed at Åbo, where he is said to have founded the old castle at the mouth of the river Aura.

A considerable body of Finns met him, and a sharp combat between them ensued, in which, after a great loss, the Finns were at last obliged to take to flight. This caused great joy to the Swedes, but the King wept as he contemplated the bodies of the slain ; when his men asked him the cause of his tears, he answered : “ That though he rejoiced at the victory for Christianity, he could not but bitterly mourn the many souls that had this day been condemned. If they had before but embraced the true faith, they would one day at least have entered into eternal bliss.”

After this victory, the Finns no longer dared to make any resistance, and Erik was enabled to subdue the south of Finland and Nyland. Many Helsinglanders settled themselves at this place, which is the reason of the Swedish language being spoken in many districts ; and the names of Helsingfors, Helsing, and Helsingby, still bear witness to this emigration. Even the patron Saint of Helsingland, Hille Bror Staffan, is commemorated in the name of Staffansby. All the Finns whom King Erik could get into his power were by him compelled to be baptized and profess Christianity, and when by this means and the erection of many Churches he had laboured on the extinction of paganism, he returned home to his own kingdom.

CHAPTER V.

SAINT HENRIK.

BISHOP HENRIK of Upsala had accompanied the King on this expedition, as well for the purpose of converting as baptizing the heathen ; and also when it was necessary to fight against them, for he was a brave

and fearless man. On the King's return Henrik had no desire to go home to his Bishopric, but thought it better, by preaching, to labour in the dissemination of Christianity in Finland. He established himself at Rantämäki near Åbo, and built the Church now called St. Mary's. He used to baptise converts at Kuppis Well, which lies immediately without the town, and likewise passed much of his time in journeys into the interior for the further spread of his mission.

At this time there lived at Sarris, in the parish of Wirmo, a rich peasant named Lalli, who had been made a Catholic. This Lalli, for a murder which he had committed had been condemned by Bishop Henrik to a very severe penance, which had greatly enraged him. It now happened that the Bishop on one of his journeys came to Sarris during the absence of Lalli, and asked to receive from Lalli's wife what was requisite for himself and his company. At that time, when there were so few travellers in circulation, there were neither good roads nor good inns to be found, and it was therefore considered every one's duty to entertain the wayfarers with hospitality. Did he meet with any other reception, the traveller often broke into the peasant's barn and larder, and helped himself to what he required. This was called *lodging by force*. As it pleased Lalli's wife to refuse food, the Bishop caused what was necessary to be taken by force, and continued his journey afterwards to the north of Finland. Immediately after this Lalli returned home, and having heard what the Bishop had done, armed his men, set out in wrath after him, and overtook him just as he was crossing the ice on Kjulo-morass. He attacked him instantly, and killed him without trouble. He then took off the Bishop's mitre and set it on his own head, so he

returned in triumph and entered his cottage in this costume, saying to his wife: "I have killed the bear!" But the monks relate that a miracle took place, which was, that when Lalli was going to lift the mitre from his head, it stuck so fast that it could not be removed without the scalp accompanying it.

The Christians took up the Bishop's body and carried it to Nousis, where his grave is yet seen; and even one of his thumbs, which could not be found in the quantity of snow, was discovered according to tradition in the following manner: the spring after his death, it happened that a peasant who was rowing over Kjulo-morass saw a raven with loud cries beating his wings in the air over a particular spot on the water. The peasant rowed there and found the missing thumb lying on a little bit of ice. It was taken up and preserved with the rest of the body, and this was considered a very great miracle; in memory of which, the Consistory of Åbo, to this day, carry the hewn-off thumb in their seal. This Bishop Henrik was afterwards considered a saint, and was peculiarly honoured as the patron of Finland. Many miracles are said to have been performed by calling on his name; and the 19th of January was celebrated all over Sweden as a festival in his honour, known by the name of Hindersmass.

CHAPTER VI.

KING ERIK'S DEATH.

THE same Magnus Henrikson who had been the cause of the death of Swerker, the elder, intended now, by getting Erik out of the way, to open himself a road to the Swedish crown. He collected an army, and

with it sailed secretly up Lake Mälär to Upsala, where he arrived when the King was in Church. One of Erik's servants hastened in to announce the arrival of the enemy, but Erik answered; "Let me hear the mass to an end; the rest of the service I hope to celebrate elsewhere." Mass being concluded, the King with his few men left the Church; but by that time, Prince Magnus with his Danes were so near that the King could not avoid them. A sharp but short combat ensued. The King defended himself manfully awhile against ten Danes, but was finally taken prisoner; and Magnus Henrikson caused him to be instantly beheaded (A.D. 1160). It is related that when his blood was shed, a very clear fountain immediately sprung forth which is still called St. Erik's Spring. His body was buried first in Old Upsala; but was afterwards removed to the Cathedral, where it is yet preserved in a silver chest. Of all Swedish saints, none has ever attained to such honours. He was accounted the patron of the whole kingdom; and all, from the King on the throne to the peasant, swore by St. Erik's name, using these words: "So help me God, and St. Erik King!" This image was placed in the great seal of the kingdom, as well as in that of the Chapter of Upsala. His head became the arms of Stockholm. The silver chest containing his bones was placed on the altar at the coronations; the choir was hung with St. Erik's tapestry, on which his exploits were worked; these were likewise painted on the walls of the old Upsala Church. His banner was hung over his grave, on which the royal saint was painted holding a shield with three crowns. This banner was considered holy, and was therefore only used against the enemy in times of peculiar danger; but was then thought to carry certain

victory along with it. Many banners in imitation of it were to be found in other Churches, and the people used, on St. Erik's day, to carry them in solemn procession round the fields expecting a better harvest. They also used to wrap a small image of this holy King in the clothes of the sick, thinking this procured the patient some ease in his sufferings; and many miracles are related by the monks to have taken place by invoking his name.

He was married to Christina, King Inge the elder's grand-daughter, and had four children by her. His brother, Iwar Jedwardson, was the ancestor of the noble race of Bonde who carry a boat in their shield.

CHAPTER VII.

MAGNUS HENRIKSON'S FALL.

AFTER King Erik's death, Magnus Henrikson easily got the terrified people to proclaim him King; but his quiet was of short duration. A universal rage at the death of their beloved sovereign spread itself throughout the kingdom. The men of Helsingland assembled first under the conduct of Fale Bure, the elder, and marched southwards taking the Up-Swedes along with them. Karl Swerkerson, who reigned in Gothaland, and who was suspected of having a share in Erik's death, marched also with a band of East Gothlanders. These united forces fell on Magnus Henrikson not far from Upsala, overcame him and the Danish troops which he headed. A Church was afterwards built on the battle-field, which in memory of the defeat of the Danes was called Dannemark.

CHAPTER VIII.

WARS FOR THE SUCCESSION.

KING ERIK left a son of the name of Knut, who desired to succeed his father ; but after four years of vain struggle with Karl, he was finally compelled to fly to Norway, so that Karl was left to the sole possession of the kingdom ; and was therefore called *Swea och Göta Konung*, or King of Sweden and Gothaland, being the first who bore this title. The first Archbishop of Sweden was ordained in his reign ; his name was Stephen, and his See, Upsala. Knut returned after the lapse of four years secretly from Norway ; surprised Karl at Wisingsö and murdered him in 1168. His wife, Christiana, escaped with great difficulty, carrying her little son, Swerker, with her, and after a journey full of miseries arrived at last, and received protection from her powerful relatives in Denmark.

Knut Erikson was soon involved in intense war with two Princes of the house of Swerker, whom he however speedily vanquished. Disturbances broke out in the northern and western provinces, while the Esthonians, making an incursion from the East, sailed into the Lake Mälar, even attacked and murdered Archbishop Johan and razed his castle Almarastäk to the ground. They then proceeded to Sigtuna which was at that time a rich and distinguished town. Though well fortified, it was soon taken, entirely destroyed, and reduced to a heap of rubbish. The Esthonians returned loaded with plunder, among which were two doors of solid silver which were taken from St. Peter's Church in Sigtuna, and are now preserved in Russia. Sigtuna never recovered this misfortune ; and the greater part of its

former inhabitants removed to Stockholm which began now to be resorted to, its situation being more favourable for commerce. This invasion of the Esthonians impressed the government with the necessity of fortifying Stockholm, and by this means excluding such unwelcome guests from Lake Mälär. To protect himself from the hatred of the Swerker family, King Knut adopted the banished Prince, Swerker Karlson, gave him a share in the administration, and died himself in peace in 1199 at Eriksberg in West Gothland. He was born in Warnhem.

Swerker Karlson, commonly called Swerker the younger, in the commencement of his reign lived in good understanding with the sons of the late King; but suspicions at last awakening in his mind towards them, he surprised them at Elgaras in West Gothland, where three of them were murdered; but Erik, the eldest, made his escape to Norway. King Swerker was a very handsome, eloquent, and valiant man, and had sought to confirm his power by intermarriage with the powerful race of Folkungar, as by granting the clergy exemption from all taxes to the crown and amenability to the usual courts of justice. But this breach of faith excited so much detestation, that when Prince Erik, three years after, returned from Norway, a great party was ready to join him. Swerker received powerful aid from Denmark, but was defeated notwithstanding at Lena in West Gothland, and escaped with but a handful of men. He returned two years afterwards with another Danish army; but was again defeated, and this time lost his life in the battle being slain by his own son-in-law. Erik Knutson reigned only six years, and all that is to be said of him is, that he was the first King in Sweden who was crowned. He died a natural death in 1216.

Johan Swerkerson now became King, though Erik's widow claimed the kingdom for her son. Johan, like all the Kings of this period, favoured the clergy exceedingly, and increased their privileges. At the Pope's instigation, he undertook a crusade for the conversion of the Esthonians with some success; but having retired with the greater part of his army, the remainder under their leaders, Jarl Karl the Deaf and Bishop Charles of Linköping were easily overcome by the Esthonians. King John died in Wisingsö in 1222, and with him the Swerker dynasty died out.

Erik XI Erikson now succeeded to the crown. He both lisped and was lame; but with these defects was wise and prudent. During his minority, the Folkungar held the reigns of government; but when he became of age and married, they rebelled against him, defeated him in 1229, and made one of their relations, Knut the Long, King; but he never possessed the kingdom in peace; continual disaffection and rebellions continuing till 1234 when King Erik returned with Danish assistance, and gained, at Sparsätra, a victory over Knut who fell in the battle. Peace, however, was not restored till Holmgeir, Knut's son, was taken prisoner and shut up in Skokloster. A Synod was held at Skenninge under this King in 1248, in which the marriage of priests was forbidden, and the Pope claimed his privilege of nominating bishops. King Erik was mild and gentle in temper, and was governed first by Jarl Ulf Fasi, and after his death by Birger Jarl of Bjelbo. He died of poison, as it was thought, in 1250, and the Erik dynasty, in the male line, died with him; but from his sister, Martha, the noble families of Sparre and Oxenstjerna claim their descent.

BOOK III.

BIRGER JARL.

CHAPTER I.

ORIGIN OF THE FOLKUNGAR.

A VERY celebrated heathen named Folke Filbyter was the ancestor of the powerful and numerous race of the Folkungar. His grandson Folke the Big was appointed King Inge, the Elder's Jarl, and was the most powerful man in the kingdom in his day. Such was his consideration in the North, that he was married to a Danish Princess, and his children by numerous intermarriages, were connected with all the royal houses in the kingdom, and thus acquired both riches and reputation. It appeared as if the offices of Jarl, Judge, and Bishop, were theirs almost by right. Their importance was yet more increased by Birger Brosa, grandson of Folke the Big, who was Jarl at the Court of Knut Erikson and Swerker the younger. Married to a Norwegian Princess, he was visited by both Norwegian and Danish Princes, to whom he accorded support or protection; and in Sweden governed almost everything at his pleasure. Birger Brosa and Folke the Big had both been wise and prudent chiefs; but at this time the Folkungar began to be much elated with their fortune and success, feeling themselves to be the first family in the kingdom, which did not prevent their envying each other's prosperity. Therefore, when

Knut the Long was raised by them to the throne in opposition to Erik the Lamé, they soon became at enmity with him and assisted King Erik back into the country.

CHAPTER II.

BIRGER MÄNSSON OF BJELBO.

BIRGER BROSA's brother, Magnus Måneskjöld lived at Bjelbo in East Gothland, and was married to Ingrid Ylfva, who was a very powerful and renowned woman. They had many children, the eldest and most celebrated of whom was called Birger. During the war between Erik the Lamé and Knut the Long, he sided with Erik, and was soon after married to his sister Princess Ingeborg; nevertheless he did not attain to great power immediately, for according to the terms of peace with Knut the Long's party, Erik was obliged to accept Knut's Jarl, Ulf Fasi as his Jarl, and he, Ulf, was so severe and arbitrary a man that all were obliged to submit to his will.

The town of Lübeck in North Germany was at this time in great distress being besieged by the Danish King by land, and shut up by sea by means of strong iron chains which he had stretched across the Trave, on which the town is situated, hoping in this way to starve them out. But it is related that Birger caused the keels of some large vessels to be plated with iron, loaded them with provisions, and sailed up the river towards Lübeck. The wind being strong and favourable, Birger hoisted all sail and so coming in a steady course, steered right on the iron chains which snapped at the mighty concussion, and the ships entered Lü-

beck with their supplies. When the Danish monarch heard this, he abandoned the siege and returned home with his army; and from this time Lübeck, through gratitude, granted many privileges of commerce to the Swedes.

CHAPTER III.

BIRGER BECOMES JARL.

As Erik the Lamé had no children; the mighty Jarl Ulf Fasi had probably intended his own children should be heirs; but he died as early as 1248, and though his son, Junker Carl, was a man of much repute, and therefore universally considered as his father's rightful successor, Ulf Fasi had been so little loved by King Erik that his son was passed by, and Birger Månsson named Jarl in his place. No disturbance broke out on this nomination, but envy and distrust of each other were mutually felt by the Jarl and the young man.

Birger immediately assumed the government of the kingdom with power and might, and at the Synod held at Skenninge, he was considered by the Papal Legate as the chief agent in affairs of state. Some enmity existing at this time between King Erik of Sweden and King Håkan of Norway, on account of mutual predatory excursions on the frontiers of both countries, the latter sent to Birger Jarl demanding his daughter Rikissa for his own eldest son, Prince Håkan, in marriage, and also that both Kings should meet the following summer at Lödöse (a place on the west coast of Sweden some miles from the sea), and settle their differences. Birger accepted the first part

of this proposal, and even promised to speak to King Erik of the second. In the summer of 1249, King Erik and Birger Jarl therefore set out for the rendezvous, and heard shortly after that Håkan had arrived before them with a large fleet. As such preparations had more the appearance of war than of a peaceful conference, King Erik immediately withdrew into the interior of the country, and Birger Jarl also retired into West Gothland as Håkan approached; but sent him a message, however, informing him in a few words of the reason of his own and the King's retreat; on the delivery of which the Ambassador instantly returned. This much displeased King Håkan; but as he required peace with Sweden, he sent his relation Gunnar to Birger Jarl, giving him however express orders, that he was to speak as laconically to the Jarl as the Jarl's Ambassador had spoken to him. Gunnar joined Birger in West Gothland and sought to persuade him to a new meeting; but he excused himself on the plea of the King's being already in East Gothland, and it being out of the question that he should retrace his steps such a long way. Gunnar, now acting against his own sovereign's injunctions, proceeded further to urge Jarl, arguing that Birger was both King and Jarl in Sweden. Birger then suffered himself to be persuaded and returned to Lödöse, where the marriage between Rikissa and the young King Håkan was settled first, and peace afterwards concluded between both kingdoms, which was confirmed by a steady friendship between the future father and son-in-law which lasted their whole lives.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EXPEDITION TO TAVASTELAND.

AN Englishman of the name of Thomas was at this time Bishop of Åbo. He was very zealous, but often harsh and imprudent; and having by a Papal Bull received a right to add to his bishopric all the lands, both private and belonging to the temples, with which the converted heathen might present him, he assumed in consequence the right of possessing himself of many more. Finally, he insisted on the execution of a Papal mandate which enjoined that the Christians should have no intercourse with the Pagans in Finland, nor even sell provisions to them. This, as might have been expected, excited them to fury, and with fire and sword they wreaked their vengeance on Nyland and the south of Finland where the Catholics dwelt. Little children were murdered without compassion as soon as they were known to be baptised; the entrails were cut out of grown-up people while they were yet living and offered to the idols; others were hunted round trees till they fell down from exhaustion; the eyes of the priests were torn out, their hands and feet hewn off; they were afterwards wrapped in straw which was set on fire, so that their cruelties caused a general terror throughout the land; and Bishop Thomas, seized with horror, fled to Wisby in the island of Gothland where he soon after died.

• When the news of these events reached the Pope, he wrote to King Erik exhorting him to a crusade for the conversion of the murderous Pagans, and for the protection of the Catholics; promising all who took part in it the same privileges and forgiveness of sins en-

joyed by those who were engaged in the Crusades to the Holy Land. King Erik and Birger Jarl were not disinclined for it, for they were much exasperated by the atrocities the heathens had perpetrated, and also partly stood in dread of a similar invasion on the east coast of Sweden, and the shores of Lake Mälär. The Pope's letter was therefore by the bishops made public all over the kingdom, and was followed by the King's and the Jarl's summons to arms. Their former warlike spirit was at once re-awakened in the Swedes, and the people were seized by a general desire to partake in this war. Many an old ancestral sword, which had long hung rusting on the walls, was taken down; many a helmet and cuirass burnished anew; vessels of all shapes and sizes launched on the waves, and many a closed purse undrawn. Many a rosy lip was kissed which never in joy of heart was kissed again; and at parting many a fair hand was wrung; and loud was the weeping of the women who were left behind, but they consoled themselves with the thought that it was for the glory of God that all this was done and suffered.

In this manner a great fleet was speedily assembled, which under the command of Birger Jarl sailed up the Gulf of Bothnia and cast anchor not far from Wasa. There Birger landed, and set up a wooden cross as a sign that he had come there merely for the spread of Christianity; and that place was in consequence called Krytsberg or Korsholm.

The heathens had been informed of his arrival, and had collected in great bodies against him; but they were defeated on every hand, and Birger Jarl carried on his work with strength and understanding. As he enacted a law that all who became Christians should be

protected both in life and property, in the space of two years, in appearance at least, he succeeded in introducing Christianity into Tavasteland and East Bothnia. To assure himself of the continued submission of the country, he fortified Korsolm and Tavastehus Castle as well as settled a number of Swedes in East Bothnia, who there formed a colony; and remained long in the country himself that he might superintend the execution of his orders and by this means assure his conquest.

CHAPTER V.

WALDEMAR BIRGIRSSON BECOMES KING.

WHILE Birger Jarl was thus occupied, Erik the Lamé died (1250), and as he left no heir there were many pretenders to the crown; however such was their power, none but the Folkungar were to be thought of; but even they were torn by internal dissensions. Some laboured in favour of Birger Jarl; others for Philip, son of Knut the Long; others for Birger Brosa's grandson, Magnus Brock; others again for Junker Carl, and great disturbances were expected to be the fruit of these conflicting opinions.

At this juncture, a very powerful and highly considered man named Iwar Blå, lived at Gröneborg near Enköping. To prevent all disorders arising out of the machinations of the Folkungar, he immediately summoned a Diet, where, especially through his influence, Birger Jarl's son, Waldemar, was chosen King, and all this was managed with such speed that all was settled fourteen days after Erik's death.

When news of this was brought to Birger Jarl in

Finland, he hastened home with the greater part of his forces, highly displeased at not having been himself named King. He, therefore, summoned those who had made the election, and when they were assembled, standing up in the midst, asked, "Who had been so bold as to order an election during the absence of the Jarl, and why they had taken a child for their King?" Iwar Blä stood up immediately answering, that he had caused the election, and added, "Though we certainly consider you most worthy to bear the crown, you are already advanced in years, and cannot live so long as your son." As Birger was still unsatisfied, Iwar proceeded: "If this displeases you, do with your son what you please. No fear but we shall be able to find another King." At this the Jarl remained awhile silent and afterwards asked, "Who they would in that case take for their King?" Iwar boldly answered. "I also can shake out a King from under my cloak." The Jarl then gave in fearing through further resistance to lose the crown for both himself and his son, and declared himself satisfied with what had happened.

To assure this dignity to his son, he caused him to be crowned with much magnificence in Linköping Cathedral (1251), that of Upsala being just at that time burnt down. Shortly after, he caused his daughter Rikissa with great pomp and a rich dower to be conveyed to the frontiers of Norway, where she was met by both the Norwegian Kings, father and son, and her marriage with the latter was celebrated with great pomp and solemnity.

Birger Jarl's mother, Ingrid Ylfva, died soon after (1252). There was a prophecy current that while her head was up her family would always remain in power.

Therefore when she was buried in Bjelbo Church, Birger Jarl caused her to be walled into a pillar standing upright so that her head should never droop.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FOLKUNGAR'S REBELLION.

THE rest of their family bore no small envy to Birger Jarl and Waldemar for this elevation, and determined to enter into a war against them, though they could not even agree amongst themselves as to who should be their leader. They first crossed the mountains, and asked help of King Hakon, but he would by no means betray his father-in-law, and remained faithful to his alliance. They thence proceeded to Denmark and Germany, and collected a great army with which they returned to Sweden gaining meanwhile many adherents. Birger Jarl on his side had also collected a large force, and met them at Herrewadsbro in Westmanland drawing up on one side of the river, and his enemies on the other. As the Folkungar were themselves very valiant, and were besides at the head of a numerous army, Birger began to doubt what the issue of the combat might be and sent his Chancellor, Kol, Bishop of Strengnäs to request a personal interview in which it was possible they might be reconciled. The Ambassador, with many and solemn promises, assured the Folkungar of safety, and thus persuaded their chiefs to accompany him unarmed across the bridge. But they had scarcely reached the other side when Birger Jarl, heedless of the Bishop's promises, seized and caused them to be beheaded on the spot (1252). In this manner fell Philip, son of Knut the

Long; Knut, the son of Magnus Brok, and many others; and the leaders being thus slain, Birger attacked and easily dispersed their army. The Swedes were spared, but all the Germans who could be overtaken were by Birger mercilessly cut to pieces; and by this victory he considered himself to have added greatly to the power of his family and established their rights to the crown; but was obliged to perform a heavy penance laid on him for his perjury by Archbishop Lars Lilje.

But Bishop Kol was tormented by great sorrow and remorse for having, though innocently, contributed to this treachery; and thenceforward never again read mass or pronounced the benediction over the Lord's body with the same lips which had deceived so many. He built Kolbäck Church near Herrewad Bridge as an expiation for his crime, but never found peace again. He at last resigned his Bishop's office, forsook his native land, and commenced a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre that he might there at least find rest. And so he did at last—in the grave.

CHAPTER VII.

OF JUNKER CARL.

THOUGH Junker Carl had been a partaker in the rebellion of the rest of his house, not having been present at Herrewad Bridge, he escaped the snare into which they fell. His and Birger's mutual friends now went between them, and succeeded at last in making a reconciliation, which however was not much to be depended on. They were certainly friends to appearance, and Birger Jarl showed Junker Carl much confi-

dence and consideration: but their secret envy and distrust were so great that it is said they plotted against each other's lives.

Junker Carl at last became weary of this sort of life, and resolved to abandon the country while the Jarl lived and await abroad a return of the smiles of fortune. He made his preparations by presenting his estate of Sko to Skokloster, to the end that the monks there might read masse: for the repose of his soul. The rest of his goods and landed property he sold; and having by these means equipped himself and his servants, he set out for Prussia where he joined himself to the Knights of the Sword who were established there. This Order had received the gift of a portion of Prussia on condition of converting, or at all events preventing the heathen of Esthonia and Lithuania from their piratical incursions; and at the time when Carl joined them, they were engaged in a violent war of this description. Soon after his arrival, a desperate engagement took place in which the heathens were far more numerous than the knights. Before the commencement of the battle, one of their number asked Carl if he would go out to the combat, or remain at home; Junker Carl answered, "that he would surely go to the fight; he might cause the heathen some annoyance in it; and even were he destined to fall, he would have gained Heaven and lost nothing upon earth." The battle began and raged long, so that the combatants were standing ankle-deep in blood. Junker Carl fought bravely and manfully as did the Knights of the Sword; but as their numbers were very inferior their ranks began to thin. One of the Knights then cried to him that he should fly out of the battle as there was no more hope of victory. The young

man looked round and answered: "I see none of you fly, why do you give me such dishonourable advice?" But the Knight answered: "You must know, young Sir, that we Brothers of the Order have sworn an oath never to fear death or to fly before the heathens were we but three against a hundred! We also know for certain by the holy words of Scripture that the caldron which boils in hell is the portion of the heathen; but we belong to the Lord and our blood will not grow cold on the ground before our souls enter into the joys of Paradise!" Then answered Junker Carl: "The same hope is also mine; and have you vowed such bravery, know that is born in my blood!" After this he recommenced the fight with redoubled valour; and heaps of heathen corpses who had fallen by his hand were afterwards drawn together to be burnt. But he was finally overpowered and fell there together with all the knights who had been in the battle.

When this was related to Birger Jarl, he said to his wife: "God take his soul to Heaven! But well it was that we were parted so!" On this, he caused his death to be solemnized by ringing of bells, masses, and as great honours as he could command.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF BIRGER JARL'S POWER.

BIRGER JARL'S first wife, Princess Ingeborg, died in 1254, and in 1261; he married Mechthild the Dowager Queen of Denmark. For his son Waldemar who was now twenty years old, and very comely and handsome, he also sought a bride, viz., the Danish Princess Sophia, who was far renowned for her beauty and

abilities. She was conducted to Sweden by her mother's father, Albrecht Duke of Brunswick, together with many knights and ladies. The marriage was celebrated in Jönköping, and a great hall was built on purpose for the festivities. The Swedish courtiers shone in new-fashioned dresses of precious stuffs; neither were good cheer, dances, games, and fair words, as well as tilts and tournaments wanting, and everything was conducted with modesty and courtesy according to the noble customs of the times.

Birger Jarl was now thought the mightiest man in the north. His daughter was married to the King of Norway; his son was King of Sweden, and married to a Danish Princess; himself all-powerful in the land, first married to a Swedish Princess, now to a Danish Queen-Dowager, and to increase his consequence, he assumed the title of Duke,* never before used in Sweden. Many among the peasants however who did not understand these distinctions called him King, as he governed the whole kingdom and was married to a Queen besides.

Birger's great power and consideration, however, were the cause of the country's enjoying continual peace, for no one ventured to attack him; on the contrary, his neighbours often took him as umpire in their differ-

* After Birger's death, the charge of Jarl was annulled; their former great power having often been dangerous to the Crown. The two highest charges after this were the Great Chancellor of Justice (Riksdrotset) who held the interior government of the kingdom, and the Lord Earl Marshal (Riksmarsken) who had the superintendence of the war department. „ To these was gradually added the office of Chancellor of the kingdom, (Riks-Cancellor) who was in the beginning but the King's private secretary, and generally a bishop or some other priest; the nobles of that time not possessing sufficient ability with the pen.

ences. Thus he settled the dispute between the Kings of Norway and Denmark; and when, during internal dissensions in Denmark, King Christopher and the Archbishop of Lund disagreed, Birger sat as judge over them at Fjellhem in Hålland, causing the one and then the other to lay their motives before him. On such occasions he was always accompanied by many high-born Northern chiefs, and even Russian Princes followed him seeking help and protection at his Court.

Birger himself avoided wars and dissensions, and though Queen Mechthild, through hatred to the Danish Queen, Margaret Språnghäst, sought to incite him to interfere in the troubles of Denmark, she was unsuccessful; and the country under him was permitted to enjoy peace and tranquillity.

CHAPTER IX.

JUDGE BENGT AND SIGRID THE FAIR.

ALL Birger Jarl's brothers were remarkable men. Eskil was judge in West Gothland, and married to a woman of great importance in Norway. His other brother Charles was Bishop of Linköping; his sister Magnhild was married to Harved Ulf or Trolle, a very rich and powerful man. The third brother was called Bengt, and was judge in East Gothland. He conceived a violent passion for a noble damsel called

* It is related that when Harved Ulf was to fetch home his bride, some warriors rushed out of the wood to carry off Magnhild by force, and their leader had disguised himself as a goblin, that he might the easier frighten her guards. But Harved, without permitting this to alarm him, dealt the supposed goblin so hard a blow on the neck, that his head flew off, whereupon the

Sigrid, who was neither of a rich nor remarkable family, but was so beautiful that she was universally known as Sigrid the Fair. Birger Jarl would not hear of this, for he thought the maiden, though of noble birth, all too mean to match with his house; but Judge Bengt followed not his brother's will in this matter, but married Sigrid without his consent. When the Jarl heard this, he sent Bengt a cloak, the one half of which was made of precious gold stuff, the other of coarse common baize, hinting thus at the difference of the families of Bengt and Sigrid, and intending to frighten him into a separation. But Bengt covered the coarse cloth with gold, pearls, and precious stones, so that the common side became as valuable, if not more so than the brocade, and then sent the cloak thus altered back to the Jarl without any other answer. This but irritated the Jarl the more who sent his greeting back with the messenger saying, "That he would speak face to face with his brother on this affair;" adding, in his haste, some bitter threats which the messenger repeated word for word to Bengt.

Shortly after the Jarl saddled his horses, and with a great company rode to Ulfåsa where Bengt lived intending to put an end to the matter. As soon as Bengt saw the Jarl's train drawing near, he made his escape to the wood, leaving Sigrid to receive her irritated brother-in-law after having given her precise instructions how she was to conduct herself. She

others fled terrified back into the forest again, leaving Harved in peace to conduct his Magnhild home. From that day, Harved changed his arms, which had before been a wolf (Ulf) *courant*, and bore a headless goblin (Troll) instead, adopting the name of Trolle instead of that of Ulf, and became the ancestor of the afterwards so celebrated Trolle family.

therefore adorned herself with her most costly robes and precious ornaments, which increased still more the lustre of her beauty; and as the Jarl rode into the court, stepped forth, bowed before him, and received him with all honour and courtesy. The Jarl was so moved by her beauty, that he leapt off his horse, and taking Sigrid in his arms, said: "Had my brother not done this, I had done it myself!" Whereupon, he permitted himself to be conducted into the house and entertained. Bengt was soon brought back out of the wood, and the former enmity of the brothers ended in a sincere and heartfelt reconciliation.

Bengt Lagman and Sigrid the Fair lived after this many happy days together at Ulfåsa, and left a large family of both sons and daughters.

CHAPTER X.

BIRGER JARL'S LAWS.

BIRGER JARL, during his government, much improved the old and faulty laws of the country, especially those of the provinces of Upland and East Gothland, and introduced many new ones, amongst which his city laws are particularly to be remarked composed of the Rights of Commerce formerly in use.

It was before this period common in the North that every one should take revenge on his enemy for himself, which so far from being forbidden by the laws was even considered more honourable than trusting to legal redress: It was therefore accounted the particular duty of the nearest relatives, by the blood of the murderers to atone for the death of the murdered, which was the origin of many long and bloody feuds that continually disturbed the peace of the kingdom.

To prevent this, Birger Jarl forbid personal retaliation, ordering that every one should seek redress for the injuries he had received in the ordinary Courts of Justice. He further assured the quiet of the land by his four Laws for Peace; viz: for the Peace of the Church, Women, House and Assize; Kyrkofrid, Qwinnofrid, Heinfrid and Tingsfrid.

He ordained that none should assault another, either in the Church or in the Churchyard, or even on the road to or from the Church. Whoever broke this ordinance was declared outlawed; and should he even be slain by the wronged party was to be unavenged. This was called Kyrkofrid* or Church peace. At this time, the custom was adopted of unarming before entering Church. The arms were kept during service in an out-house built for the purpose, which is to this day called the Weapon House.

It was also a universal custom throughout the North, in courtship not only, not to regard the bride's consent, but even not to consult her parents. Armed with sword and helmet, and accompanied by his brave companions in arms, the lover often presented himself, and if by fair words he could not succeed, he carried off the lady by force in which skirmish her father and brothers were often killed, and she constrained to marry a man whom she hated, who had murdered her nearest relatives, and in the most shameful manner treated herself. It was therefore not an uncommon occurrence that she revenged herself at the first fitting opportunity, even if she waited for it for years. Sometimes she murdered her husband, or in other cases their common children,

* As in these disquiet times, merchants had no security from violence in any other spot, they struck their booths by the churches, whence arose the first places for markets and commerce.

to make the father's sorrow and her own revenge the greater. Such rapes took place, especially when an affianced couple were travelling to the Church, or to a priest to be married. The rejected lover often laid himself in ambush with his friends by the road, fell on the bridal party, slew the bridegroom, and carried off the bride. For this reason some stout youths were always appointed to protect the bride on these journeys, who received in consequence the title of bridesmen or bride servants. Birger Jarl caused a law to be published, that none should in this way disturb, or carry off a woman by force, without incurring the same punishment which he had before awarded for the breach of the law regarding the Peace of the Church, (Kyrkofrid). This was called Peace of Women (Qwinnofrid).

For the establishment of general personal security, he forbid, under the same penalty, the attacking any man, his wife, children, or servants, within his own house or even the enclosure of his property. This was called Home-peace, or House-peace.

He finally forbade in like manner all violence offered to those who were on the road to a Ting or at the Ting itself. This was called Tingsfrid.

Birger Jarl greatly improved the method of convicting criminals at the seats of justice. This had before his time been conducted in a variety of ways. The judge sometimes ordered a single combat between the disputants in the belief that God would assist the innocent; but the Courts of Justice were always beset by mercenary combatants, who hired themselves for such occasions; and he who was able to pay the strongest champion was sure to gain the cause. Another time the judge commanded the trial by fire, which consisted in the accused either passing over nine red hot plough-

shares, or else carrying a red hot iron on his bare arms. Could he accomplish this uninjured, his innocence was considered to be proved by Heaven. These forms of justice had it is true been before forbidden, but were still in use till Birger Jarl put a stop to them entirely.

In the remotest periods, fathers often possessed nothing to leave to their children but their arms. These consisted for the most part in arrows, which in the old language were called *Arf*, whence that word is now used for every kind of inheritance. As daughters did not require these weapons, the custom arose that they should have no inheritance; but it went according to a proverb in West Gothland "to the hat, from the cap." Women besides had no right to anything in their husband's houses, but were considered to be amply provided for by the dower* which they got, and were treated according to their husband's pleasure. Birger Jarl decreed that the daughters should inherit half as much as the sons, and that the wife should possess a right to a third of the husband's property.

Another custom of the times was, that poor people gave themselves away as slaves and household property to the rich on condition of being provided for till death. Such were called Gift-Slaves; but Birger Jarl put a stop to this habit also, thinking it by no means justifiable that one man should be slave to another.

It had also been customary when vessels were wrecked, that they should be plundered by people of the coast, and the survivors made slaves, the inhabitants believing, or pretending to believe, that they must be Viking vessels. The dwellers of the Skäres thought

* This was called *Hindradagsgjaf*, or Morning-gift, being the present which the husband gave to his wife on the morning following their wedding.—AUTHOR.

proper to treat all shipwrecked persons in this manner, though at this time the inhabitants of the shores of the Baltic had been baptized, and the piracies of the Vikings had entirely ceased.

This inhuman custom Birger strove to abolish and was strongly supported by the clergy. The Archbishop even gave a hundred days' indulgence to those who assisted the shipwrecked; while he who plundered them was ex-communicated together with his whole parish, and if he died during his excommunication his body was to be thrown into the sea.

By these and several similar enactments, the Jarl introduced gentler morals, and juster mode of thought amongst the people, and their manners even gradually acquired a finer polish. The fire which had formerly burnt on a great hearth in the centre of the floor, the smoke wandering out through a hole in the roof was now banished to the end of the hall, and confined within a proper fire-place to which regular chimnies were built. Beakers or rummers were introduced instead of drinking-horns, and the fine clothes of foreign countries came gradually into wear.

CHAPTER XI.

STOCKHOLM FOUNDED BY BIRGER JARL.

MANY old stories are in circulation about the origin of Stockholm. The people relate in an old song, that one of the Bishops of Strengnäs's fishermen once caught a magnificent salmon, which he, thinking much too good for the Bishop's table, said according to the ballad :

Salmon, Salmon Lerebate !

Ye shall not come on Bishop's plate.

To which the Bishop answered :

To this my Bishop's word I plight,
That thou shall sleep i' the tower to night.

But the fisher replied again :

- My oaken boat which sails so free,
Shall settle soon 'twixt lum and me.

On which he escaped from Tynnels Island on which was the Bishop's castle, and is said to be the first who established himself at Stock-Island (Stockholm).

Others relate that when Sigtuna was destroyed by the Esthonians, its former inhabitants enclosed a quantity of gold and silver in a log or stock and threw it into the Lake with the intention of settling and building a new town where this beam should come ashore. It is said to have been found on the Riddarholm, where it is reported to be still preserved in the old grey tower on the north-west side. This then is said to be the origin of the name Stock-holm, and the expelled citizens of Sigtuna, according to this legend, its first inhabitants. The town was very small, and occupied that island alone, on which the city now stands. It was not till later that the shores on each side the straits, which were then uninhabited and covered with thick forests, were rendered fit for building, and at this day when digging under the streets which now cover those spots, the remains of boats and wrecks are sometimes found.

On this island, Birger Jarl caused two strong towers to be built, and called the one on the site of the present palace, the Three Crowns. He joined these towers by two walls, along which the old streets wound. This fortification was intended to defend the entrance to the lake, and the city was afterwards built according

to the fashion of the times with narrow streets crowded with the gable ends of high houses. Birger himself was the founder of the first Church, which is that called *Stor Kyrkan* or the High Church. The excellent position for commerce of the new town soon made it a place of increasing resort; it grew in size, and still bears witness to the great judgment of its founder.

CHAPTER XII.

BIRGER JARL'S LAST DISPOSITIONS AND DEATH.

THAT he might have his sons richer and more powerful than any other, and thus ensure the crown to them, Birger divided the kingdom between them in 1254. Waldemar was King; Magnus, Duke of *Södermanland*; Bengt, who was to have been a Bishop, was made Duke of *Finland*; and Erik, Duke of *Småland*.

The Jarl died at last at *Hjelmholund*, A.D. 1266, and was buried in the Monastery of *Warnhem* by the side of his first wife the Princess *Ingeborg*.

BOOK IV.

BIRGER JARL'S SONS.

CHAPTER I.

OF KING WALDEMAR AND DUKE MAGNUS.

AFTER the Jarl's death, the kingdom was divided as he had appointed, and the authority of the King thus much circumscribed by that of his brothers. As Walde-
mar was besides greatly addicted to pleasure and luxury, his consideration declined, while that of Duke Magnus, who was active and ambitious, speedily increased on its ruins. The latter held a magnificent Court in Nyköping and made his knights and courtiers often hold tournaments and other knightly sports, that they might be experienced and expert in war; and for these reasons the boldest and most ambitious spirits joined the Duke by preference. This did not fail to excite much envy and hatred in the mind of the King, which enmity was increased by his Queen. Her royal husband was as handsome in person as in face; and proud of this distinction she nick-named Duke Magnus, as he was very thin and of a dark complexion, Kittelbotaren, or the Kettle-mender. Her other brother-in-law, Duke Erik, who was gentle and quiet, she named Erik Ingenting (Nothing). These jokes were, however, carried to the Duke's ears, and Magnus promised that he would be sure enough one day to mend Queen Sophia's kettles for her.

CHAPTER II.

P R I N C E S S J U T A .

QUEEN SOPHIA had at one time made an excursion to Denmark to visit her family, and after her return, her sister, Princess Juta, was seized with a longing to see her again. She had been formerly a nun and Prioress in the Convent of Roskild, but finding the sisters too strict for her, she had abandoned the convent, and resumed by force the property which she had presented to it. Her guardians begged her to accept one of the noble rivals for her hand; but she declared she would die a maid, and desired nothing so much as to visit her sister Sophia in Sweden. She was, therefore, furnished with a suitable company, and escorted to that country where she was received like an angel from Heaven. She found peculiar favour in Waldemar's eyes, for she was both beautiful and young; but as she was also very flighty, she permitted herself to be captivated by him, so that the whole Court knew of their unlawful love, and Juta finally gave birth to a son in 1273.* At this news Sophia mourned to such a degree that she lost both her colour and her beauty, and her former gaiety departed. The whole country was struck with horror and detestation of the King's great crime, for not only was Juta his sister-in-law, but even a professed nun, and Waldemar was himself obliged to undertake a journey to the Pope in Rome to try to obtain his forgiveness.

* The noble family of Lejonhufoud are descended from the grandson of this Prince; and in memory of their royal Danish blood, bore first the three leopards of Denmark, but afterwards only three lions' heads in their shield.

CHAPTER III.

CIVIL WAR.

ON his return from Rome, Waldemar caused a Diet to be called at Strengnäs, in which the long-stifled enmity of the brothers broke out. In vain the Bishops and great Lords strove to reconcile them; in vain their brother Bengt offered to divide the half of his Duchy of Finland amongst them. Waldemar set out for Stockholm, and Magnus for Denmark, whence he received supplies of men and money from King Erik. Thus prepared, he returned and broke in on West Gothland where he received much support, especially from Duke Erik, who resented Queen Sophia's having called him Erik Ingenting. Waldemar, on the other hand, collected a large force in the north, and marched with it through Nerike, stopping himself at Ramundeboda with his Queen and the best of his troops; but letting the whole peasant force pass before him into West Gothland. Scarcely had they advanced as far as Hofva, before Duke Magnus fell upon them. The peasants, without a leader, and unaccustomed to such mail-clad riders as the troops of Magnus, soon fell into disorder, were beaten and fled on every hand, hiding themselves in woods and morasses. During this time, King Waldemar was taking his siesta in Ramundeboda, and Queen Sophia playing chess, and speaking contemptuously of Magnus, the Kettlemender. But at that moment a rider came flying from the fight with bloody armour and foam-covered steed, related the Duke's victory and advised the King to make his escape, for the present, till he could again assemble his scattered forces; but Waldemar was too frightened to think of anything but his personal safety, so he fled through Wermeland to

Norway, where he left his son under the care of a Norwegian chief.

Magnus put his advantage to profit. Waldemar's troops, which had fled to Nerike, were entirely dispersed, and he reached Upsala unopposed, where he immediately caused himself to be crowned by the priests whose rights and privileges he confirmed. He had despatched some horsemen from Hofva to overtake the flying King; they came up with him as he sate at table in a village in Werneland, and conducted him to Magnus. Then said Waldemar very humbly: "I am now come to you at your mercy; do with me according to your own virtue, and not according to the lies of evil men. Give me my paternal inheritance, and then let us be friends." Magnus promised him mercy, and said: "he would treat his brother in a manner that all should approve." Hereon he called a Diet (A.D. 1275) in which he left the whole kingdom of Gotha to Waldemar, but reserved that of Sweden to himself, and retained its crown and kingly title.

Waldemar was, however, not long satisfied with this partition, and crossed over to Norway seeking assistance. A meeting was appointed between both sovereigns in which he claimed the whole kingdom of Sweden, and the Norwegian monarch supported his demand till it appeared that Magnus would not give up any part of what he already possessed, and then the former did not choose to enter into a war with Sweden for Waldemar's sake.

Waldemar next turned to King Erik of Denmark, who was at war with Magnus, because the loan which he, while Duke, had received from Denmark was still unpaid. Erik received Waldemar kindly, who resumed courage in consequence, and began boasting, that "as

Magnus had driven himself out by Danish arms, so would he expel Magnus by the same means." But after the Swedes had committed depredations in Skåne, and the Danes in West Gothland, the Kings came to terms. Magnus promised to pay his debt, and Walde-mar remained without a friend. He was, therefore, formally compelled to resign the kingdom to his brother, and afterwards returned to Denmark. As he, however, at a later period entered into further plots against King Magnus, he was finally made prisoner and kept in strict confinement in Nyköping Castle. Meanwhile, after Sophia's death, he had given himself up to vicious courses, and consoled himself thus for the loss of his crown.

CHAPTER IV.

REBELLION OF THE FOLKUNGAR, 1278.

IMMEDIATELY after taking possession of the throne, Magnus courted a very beautiful and virtuous Princess, named Hedwig of Holstein, and soon after celebrated his nuptials with her. By this union, as well as by his love of magnificence and foreign customs, many foreigners were introduced into the kingdom, and were highly favoured by the King. Duke Peter Porze of Halland enjoyed great consideration, and was so powerful, that having once invited the King as his guest to Axewalla Castle, he held him prisoner there till he made preparation for paying his debt to the Danish crown; but in spite of this audacity, Porze remained in as great favour as before.

Another Dane, named Ingemar, was honoured with several large fiefs in the country, and one of the King's

relations in marriage. As he surpassed the Swedish nobles in courtesy and all knightly accomplishments, many of them took him in aversion, especially as he behaved with great arrogance towards them. The Folkungar were, however, the most indignant at it, as they were still very powerful in the country; they complained to the King of his preference for foreigners, and said to Ingemar in express terms that they "would like to know why the King had lifted him up on their shoulders? And that he might come to know that they were in all his equals, and did not intend to suffer this any more." But Sir Ingemar answered boldly: "that he thanked the King and not them for his good fortune, and that they might be as wroth as they pleased; but he hoped it would turn but little to their profit;" and so they parted, on either side not much satisfied with this conversation.

Shortly after, Queen Hedwig with her father, the Duke of Holstein, visited Skara, and Ingemar was of their party. The angry Folkungar took counsel how they should punish their rival, and arming their friends and servants, attacked the noble company at Skara. The Queen made her escape in alarm, and hid herself in a convent; but Sir Ingemar was soon put to death; the Duke was imprisoned in Ymseborg in West Gothland, while the rebels collected their forces and took Jönköping which they intended to defend against the King. It was even said that the deposed King, Waldemar, at this news came to Jönköping in the hope of regaining his crown, which he had several times formally renounced.

Magnus was thrown into the utmost consternation and alarm as well on account of the danger his Queen and his father-in-law, as of the alarming power of the Folkungar,

which might be further increased by Waldemar's partizans. He therefore wrote courteous and friendly letters to them, praising their zeal for their country which would not allow them to endure foreigners and foreign fortune-hunters ; and by these arts gained the liberty of Hedwig and her father, after which he invited the chiefs of the rebel party to Skara, that he might consult them on the general weal. They arrived without suspicion, and were immediately seized by the King's people and imprisoned in the same castle in which they surprised Sir Ingemar. Hence they were conveyed to Stockholm where two of them were beheaded, and the third was obliged to purchase his life at the expense of almost his whole property.

CHAPTER V.

OF KING MAGNUS LODUSLÄS' LAWS.

KING MAGNUS was very severe and strict in all that regarded the laws, and obedience to them. He confirmed and strictly exacted the enactment of the four laws for peace which his father Birger Jarl had made ; and Folke Algotson, who carried off a Swedish maiden named Ingrid, who was affianced to the Chancellor of Denmark was obliged for thus having broken the Qwinnofrid to fly the country with many of his relations ; and, though they were rich and powerful, to pay heavy fines besides.

In 1280, the King assembled a Diet in Skenninge, where many important resolutions were taken. 1^o. Peace was to be kept fourteen days before the King's arrival at any place and fourteen days after he had left it. This was called the King's peace. 2^o. All oppro-

brrious appellations or affronts offered to the King's men, or any of his courtiers were expressly forbidden. 3°. He who had been affronted was not to revenge himself, but to seek redress by law. 4°. Widows and fatherless children were considered to be under the King's special protection, and those who wronged them were to incur a severe penalty. 5°. To diminish for Government the expenses of the people at assizes, and the journeys of the great nobles. The number of followers each was to have in his suite was fixed to forty horses for a Duke; thirty for a Bishop; twelve for the King's Counsellors. A knight and a priest were to have four, and so on.

The King assembled another Diet at Alsö in 1285, in which he issued a very severe proclamation against Lodging by Force. An innkeeper was appointed for every village who was to determine what peasant was to lodge the travellers; he who refused this duty was to be fined four marks; but the traveller who did not pay his expenses, or yet worse, wanted to help himself by force to the peasant's property, exposed himself to severe punishment. As King Magnus kept to these enactments very strictly, the quiet and security of the land were greatly improved. The peasants thought that the King by them hung a safe lock to their barns, and therefore called him Magnus Laduslås,* which surname he has since retained.

In former times every Swedish man was bound, at the King's summons, to present himself perfectly ready for war; that is to say, according to the fashion of that day, with shield, helmet, sword, bow, and three dozen of arrows, as well as provisions for a considerable time. But another style of warfare had already been introduced in the south of Europe. The knights were

* Lada, barn; Lås, lock.

clad in mail from head to foot, their very horses were covered with plates of iron, and their arms were a sword and very long lance. So strongly defended, they little dreaded the blows or arrows of the infantry; and when a serried troop of such riders holding their long lances in rest, rushed against the infantry as it was first equipped, it was impossible for them to make resistance. They were pierced by the lances before they could in any way get at their antagonists; the first line fell, the ranks were broken, and the rest were trampled under the feet of the heavy horses. In the war with Denmark, Magnus saw the use of such cavalry, and wished to introduce it, but the poor could not afford the armour. He therefore offered that whoever equipped a horse and rider for the King's service should enjoy perfect freedom from every other tax on his estate. Such an estate was then called *frälse* or free, and its owner *frälseman*; and this was the origin of the freedom from taxation of the noble classes and their ground. With the knightly armour, the distinctions on the shields were also adopted, whence arose the heraldry of Sweden as well as that of other countries.

CHAPTER VI.

MAGNIFICENCE OF KING MAGNUS LADUSLÄS.

THERE were many in the kingdom who hated King Magnus for his treachery, not only to his own brother Waldemar, but towards the rebellious *Folkungar*; and he knowing this was in continual alarm of conspiracies and insurrections. To the end that he might gain more friends, he loaded the clergy with favours. He

founded the convent of the Sisters of St. Claire, and the Franciscan monastery in the capital, (since changed into the Clara Church, and that of Riddarholm), and many others throughout the kingdom ; and enlarged the privileges of the clergy considerably. For this reason they were devoted to him, and the Pope by a peculiar Bull in his favour, took him under his own especial protection, and excommunicated all those who should cabal against him. He collected many of the nobility round him by the pomp and knightly manners of his Court, and particularly by instituting knighthood. At the foundation of the Convent of St. Claire, mention is made, for the first time, of the dubbing of knights in Sweden, and it is thought that the Seraphim Order (the highest in the kingdom) was instituted by him on this occasion. This honour was much sought after, as it gave higher distinction than that of a mere man-at-arms, and a knight's wife alone was allowed to be called Lady. Magnus was also strongly supported by the peasantry, whom he protected against the oppressions of the rich. This was the cause of his being chosen King by the inhabitants of the Island of Gothland which had been independent, but was henceforth united to the Swedish crown.

By means of the large gifts which the crown had in the course of some reigns made to the convents and churches, and by the non-taxation of both clergy and nobility, the royal revenues had dwindled to such a degree that they did not suffice to cover the expenses of the Court, especially with so pomp-loving a King as Magnus. He, therefore, not venturing to lay on new taxes, summoned to that effect a Diet in Stockholm in 1282, in which, first a strict examination, and then a proportionate tax was laid on every acre of arable land.

Besides this, it was determined that all large indraughts, and mines as well at that time as in future, and all large forests should be considered royal property, and those who worked them should pay a rent to the King.

Before his death, Magnus caused his eldest son Birger to be crowned and appointed Riksmarsken (the Earl Marshal); Torkel Knutsson to govern the kingdom during Birger's childhood. His other sons he made Dukes of different provinces of the kingdom, that they might be the first men in the realm, and thus King Magnus thought he had secured to his descendants the power and might which he had acquired by rebellion against his brother, and confirmed by the treacherous murder of his relatives.

Magnus Ladulas died in 1290 at Wisingsö. The peasants whose friend he had been carried his body with many tears to Stockholm. The knights followed the corpse, and it was buried, according to his own desire, before the altar of the Franciscan Church; many funeral masses being sung over it, and other solemnities performed, with which the priests honoured the memory of their benefactor.

BOOK V.

OF KING BIRGER AND HIS BROTHERS. *

CHAPTER I.

TORKEL KNUTSSON.

MAGNUS LADUSLÅS left three Princes, viz. Birger, who had already been proclaimed King, Erik and Waldemar; but as they were all very young, the Earl Marshal, Torkel Knutsson, stood at the head of affairs. This Torkel was a very wise and prudent man; bold and determined when it was requisite, so that the kingdom was well administered; and felt no want as long as he governed it. Old King Waldemar who had been kept by his brother, Magnus Laduslås, in strict confinement in Nyköping Castle, received more freedom from the Marshal. He was permitted to move about accompanied by a guard: several apartments were assigned to his use; he was allowed his own kitchen, pages, chamberlains, and everything else he required. Waldemar's son, Junker Erik, was shut up in Stockholm Castle till his father's death to prevent disturbances; but the Marshal provided him richly with all he could require.

Torkel Knutsson was zealous in every thing that could tend to confirm and increase the royal authority. He therefore determined to lower the great power of the clergy by whom the royal revenues were so materially decreased; and to this end proposed that they

should contribute to the expenses of war, as well as submit to the fines imposed for breaking the King's peace. The priests, however, were displeased with this restriction on their privileges, but did not venture to object though the Pope in a threatening Bull remonstrated against the Marshal's encroachments, and reproached the Bishops with their cowardice. Still Torkel Knutsson was not to be frightened, and proceeded in 1299 to exact poor-rates from the clergy. The Bishops now protested, but in vain; the Bishop of Westerås who was boldest was obliged to fly to Norway, and the others did not venture to oppose the Marshal.

CHAPTER II.

WAR AGAINST THE KARELIANS.

KING ERIK the Holy had converted and subdued the south of Finland and Birger Jarl Tavasteland, but the east still remained almost heathen. This part was called Kyrialand, or Karelen, and the Karelians, its inhabitants, were a wild and ungovernable people who lived a savage and solitary life in their immense forests, and worshipped their idols. Jumal was the name they gave their good Divinity, and Perkel, the evil God, who were said often to strive together, and throw each other over great mountains. The figures of these and other inferior divinities cut in wood were kept by the people in their huts, but they had wide open places of sacrifice in the forests with a stone in the centre. When the Karelian had approached the stone within a certain distance, he uncovered his head, laid himself down on the ground, and in the utmost silence crawled on to the

stone where he made his sacrifice of the horns and bones of rein-deer and elks. If they were in any danger they sacrificed goats, cats, and cocks, and sprinkled their idols with the blood. These people were very bitter against the Christians, and sometimes burst out of their thick forests, committing the most dreadful devastations on their neighbours, slaying them, drawing out their entrails, and treating them in the most cruel manner.

The Regent determined to put a stop to these proceedings, and therefore sailed with a strong army to Finland, 1293. There was no possibility for the heathen to make any resistance, so they were speedily conquered. He built a fort at Wiborg to keep them in order, and there garrisoned a strong force, while Bishop Peter of Westeraås who had accompanied the expedition laboured assiduously for the conversion of the people. The Russians having assisted the Karelians in this war, the Regent took their Castle Kexholm, where he placed Sigge Lake as Governor, and then returned home. This is the first time the Swedish and Russian forces met in combat.

Many festivals were celebrated with great solemnity on the Regent's return. Erik Menwed, King of Denmark, first solemnized his marriage (1296) in Helsingborg, with King Berger's sister Ingeborg, and afterwards King Birger was married in Stockholm (1298) to the Princess Martha, the Danish King's sister. The old chronicles describe these festivities particularly. The royal pairs were dressed in damask and cloth of gold; their horses were covered with precious stuffs, and there was not only mead and ale in abundance but also wine, both white and red. There was heard the sound of pipe, and drum, and trumpet, as well at the

dance as at the tournament. The King sat under a canopy looking on the combat, and so brave and courteous were the knights, that Gavion and Percival would not have conducted themselves better. Chief amongst them all was Duke Erik, for he was considered not only the handsomest and most chivalrous, but also so courteous and mild, that he is described as an angel from Heaven, and all who saw him wished him well.

CHAPTER III.

WAR AGAINST THE RUSSIANS.

MEANWHILE the garrison of Kexholm began to suffer from want of provisions, which inclined some to abandon the fortress altogether. Sigge Lake however would by no means be induced to betray his orders, but remained there with the bravest of his men, while the others withdrew under pretence of sending reinforcements and supplies from home, but none arrived. The Russians meanwhile who had received intimation of the state of affairs at Wiborg collected around it, and carried on the siege night and day. Sigge Lake certainly made a brave resistance, but the provisions began to run short. He defended himself however manfully, but at last the garrison having been several days without food, they determined to cut their way through the enemy. Sigge Lake put himself at the head of his company, opened the gates and rushed out on the besiegers. A great slaughter followed in which the Swedes at first prevailed, but as they were exhausted by want of food, and the Russians in much greater numbers, they were overcome. Sigge Lake fell with all his followers, two only excepted who suc-

ceeded in cutting their way through the enemy's ranks, and brought this melancholy news to Sweden.

The Regent then collected another army with which he sailed up the Neva. Not meeting any enemy, he commenced building on an island in the river a strong fortress which he called Landscrona, and furnished with provisions for the garrison. The Russians thinking this new settlement very prejudicial to them as it stopped all communication on the Neva, collected to the number of thirty thousand against the Swedes. They first constructed great pyres of dry wood, as high as houses, on floats, set fire to them, and let them float down the stream intending by this means to burn the whole Swedish fleet. But the Regent erected strong bulwarks, and cast thick iron chains across the stream which caught the burning piles, till they were consumed to the water's edge, by which means he saved his fleet. The Russians finding this stratagem of no effect, undertook the siege of the castle, and that with such violence, that they did not care how many of them fell; but the fortress had such good walls, and was so stoutly defended, that they could make nothing of the attack. At last Matts Kettilmundson, a young and brave knight, made a sally, and drove away the enemy with great loss. A portion of the Russian cavalry, to the amount of one thousand men, halted at a little distance from the fortress in a wood, where their armour and gay caparisons gleamed in the sunlight. As the Swedes on the fortress walls were contemplating this, Matts Kettilmundson presented himself, and said that with the Regent's permission, "he would venture a brush with the bravest among the enemy." Having gained permission, he buckled on his armour, took his arms, and had his horse led out, on which he leapt.

The Swedes mounted the ramparts to see the strife, but when the knight had got across the ditch, he turned round, and saluting them, bade them "live happily, for as regarded himself, it depended on God in Heaven if he was to return with a vanquished foe, or if another fate awaited him." He then advanced boldly towards the enemy, and sent an interpreter with a challenge declaring that the Swedish knight was ready to fight with the bravest among the Russians for life, goods and freedom. The Russian King collected his knights at this summons, but not one had a fancy to try his fortune with Sir Matthew. He therefore sat the whole day before the Russians, and waited in vain. Towards evening he rode back into the castle, and was received with much joy and praise of his courage. The next morning the Russians had evacuated the ground.

The Swedish army now began to long for home, so that after having provided Landserona with provision, and garrisoned it with three hundred men, under command of a knight called Swen, the Regent prepared his fleet for the return of the rest of his troops. But as the ships were detained many days by contrary wind, Matts Kettilmundson landed with many of his men and their horses, and making depredatory excursions into the interior of the country ravaged all Ingermanland in this manner. After this, loaded with booty, he regained the ships, and accompanied the Regent on his homeward voyage.

The army returned with joy and victory home to Sweden, and joy and gladness they found before them there, for King Birger's eldest son Magnûs was just born in the Castle of Stockholm, and over the whole kingdom the birth of the future heir of the crown was celebrated with festivities and rejoicing.

Meanwhile the provisions in Landscrona, had begun to spoil as summer advanced, because the new walls were yet damp. This occasioned scurvy and many other diseases among the garrison, so that the mortality was great. Some proposed sending home to ask for help, others objected, "not wishing to grieve the Marshal they preferred awaiting some other help from Heaven." The Russians soon gathered round the fortress to storm it, and it was found that there were then but twenty men in a condition to bear arms to defend it. As the Russians carried on the siege briskly, and as fresh troops continually supplied the place of those who had fallen, the walls were gradually gained. The Swedes retired fighting, but the Russians set the houses on fire, when the Governor and some others, flinging down their arms, were willing to surrender, but were at once cut to pieces. The survivors perceiving this sought refuge in a stone cellar, where they defended themselves manfully, and it was impossible for the enemy to force them to submit until they had sworn to grant them their lives, on which the Swedes surrendered and were carried away into the interior of the country; the fortress of Landscrona was razed to the ground (1300) and such was the termination of the war.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BROTHERS' ENMITY.

SHORTLY after King Birger was crowned in Söderköping with much solemnity, and Duke Waldemar was married at the same time with great pomp to Christina, youngest daughter of the Regent, whose consequence

was at this time at the highest. Shortly after he made himself a second marriage with a German Countess, and the King and the Dukes were present at the nuptials. On the last day of the marriage feasts, the Marshal called the brothers together and resigned his authority, begging them "to choose a younger and more active servant than he." But the brothers said they could never find a bet er than Torkel Knutsson, and as the King's affairs were the most weighty, they begged the Marshal to remain at his side, and chose Ambjörn Sixtensson Sparre as Chief Officer for the Dukes.

This was the commencement of disunion among the brothers, and some even went so far as to say that Duke Erik sought the means of acting in the same way with his brother Birger, as their father Magnus had done with his brother Waldemar. This enmity first broke out openly at an entertainment at Aranäs, Torkel Knutsson's house, where the King forced from his brothers a written promise of never undertaking any thing against himself or against his will. After this they separated; but no sooner had the King reached Wisingsö, than he sent after the brothers requiring their immediate presence. The Duke's friends counselled them against trusting themselves in the King's hands, but Erik took courage and set out. The King received him ill, and desired a Bishop to read all the articles of complaints against the Dukes. The Bishop excused himself from the office as not in his province, and it was done by a knight. The heads of complaints were: "1°. That the Dukes had exported a great quantity of visions against the King's orders. 2°. That they rode with the King's enemies through the country, and that they had broken the King's peace. 3°. That the

Duke's servant had given the King's gate-keeper a box on the ear. 4^o. That they carried themselves so haughtily, that the Dukes' men always gained the victory over the King's men at tilts and tournaments; and that Matts Kettilmundson had his hand in this doing every thing in contempt of the King."

Here Birger stood up: "Had I not given you safe conduct here, you should experience other than this. You shall, as it is, have peace till sunset; but know, that wheresoever afterwards you may fall in my hands, it will go ill with you." Duke Erik then humbly asked if he had free permission to withdraw unmolested, which the King granted and the Duke acted upon it without delay.

CHAPTER V.

FIRST WAR AND FIRST RECONCILIATION.

THE Dukes and their most devoted friends escaped first to Denmark; but finding King Erik sided with his brother-in-law the Swedish monarch, they addressed themselves to Hakon of Norway, to whose only daughter Ingeborg Duke Erik was affianced. They were there kindly received, and Erik got Konghälla (the town now called Kongelf) and the neighbouring provinces as a fief, from which they made continual inroads into the country, and founded the fortress of Dalaborg, burnt Lödöse where Gotemburgh now stands, though King Birger had founded a fortress close to it to protect the country against the Dukes. The King despatched an army under the command of eight knights to free West Gothland from these incursions; but the knights stopped at Gullspångself between the lakes

Skagern and Wener, and destroying the bridge imagined themselves in security. Matts Kettilmundson, however, found his way there with his knights in the middle of a dark night; and some wading, some swimming their horses over the stream, they fell unexpectedly on the King's people, took them prisoners, and mastered all their effects. The King now began to dread his brothers in earnest, and ordering a force of twenty thousand men to Gullspång, commenced himself the siege of Dalaborg, whose garrison had ravaged the neighbouring country, and ruined the peasantry. Duke Erik meanwhile, with an army which King Håkan had put under his command, advanced against his brother; but when they were at about three miles' distance, their hearts softened towards each other, and they signed a peace (1305.) The Dukes were to retain what their father had left them, and their former enmity be mutually forgotten and forgiven. They were, however, to pay homage to Magnus, Birger's son, who during these troubles had been chosen his father's successor on the Swedish throne.

From this time the King and his brothers seemed to be thoroughly reconciled; and the Dukes said it was Torkel Knutsson who had made such ill-will between them. Some overhearing this, and warning the Marshal of the King's changed mind towards him, of which Duke Erik was said to be cause, he answered, "that he never had done anything against the King's command, and wished that he had served God as he had served his sovereign." But no great time intervened before the King and his brothers, with many knights and a great train, came unexpectedly to Lena where the Marshal lived, and took him prisoner. When the Marshal saw the King, he said, "This shameful betrayal of me,

King, will be to your eternal shame." On which he was led out, set on a horse with his feet tied under the horse's body, and so they rode off, carrying the old man to Stockholm, for they dreaded his friends and relations. He was now accused of having made disunion between the members of the royal family, and having ruined the kingdom by his great magnificence and proud living, particularly after his last marriage. Many sent in petitions in his favour; but the King and his brothers were immoveable. Duke Waldemar separated from the Marshal's daughter, under pretence that having had the same godfathers they were related within the degrees which the Church, without an especial permission from the Pope, found unlawful.

Sir Folke Johanson came at last to the Marshal, and informing him that the King had ordered his death, begged his forgiveness for this message, for which he was himself very sorry. The Marshal was then led out of the town to the south side, where his grave was dug before his eyes in unconsecrated ground, and his head was then struck off with a sword. A cabin with a cross and altar were erected over his grave, in which masses were sung for the rest of his soul, and all who passed on their way to or from town, stopped to offer up prayers for his repose. The following spring his relations got the King's permission to take up the body and bury it in the Franciscan Church, which was done with much ceremony. And King Birger imagined that by the Marshal's death, he and his brothers were reconciled for ever.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SECOND WAR AND SECOND RECONCILIATION.

THE same year, 1306, the Dukes made a great entertainment at Bjelbo, for the marriage of five of their servants, inviting a large company from far and near. In the midst of this feasting, they secretly despatched bodies of men, some to Hundhammar, some to their estates in Upland, appointing a rendezvous with their people at a given period. On this they rode with haste by Kolmorden to Hundhammar, went on board the vessels they could find, and so proceeded without delay to Hatuna where the King at that time was staying. Birger who was without suspicion of their intentions received them well, and quartered their men. Here the troop armed themselves, and in the evening, on a signal from the Duke, rushed out and seized the King and Queen with their Court. The Dukes now carried their prisoners to Stockholm; but the burghers remained faithful to their King and would not open their gates; they were therefore obliged to proceed to Nyköping, where they shut up the King and Queen in the fortress; on which Duke Erik commenced a predatory excursion through the country, taking castles, and subduing the people.

In the first hurry and confusion of the attack on the King at Hatuna, one of the courtiers, named Arwid, snatched up Prince Magnus, the King's son, and bore him out of the strife on his back. He escaped to Denmark, where he left the Prince to Erik's protection, shedding tears as he related the treachery which had been practised on his Sovereign. King Erik being doubly bound to King Birger, his brother-in-law by

two marriages, took this greatly to heart, and determined to assist him; he therefore mustered an army, but when the Swedes and Danes were within six miles of each other, they concluded peace for a year (1307). During this time, Duke Waldemar went on a pilgrimage to the south of Europe, and returned in a short time having a body of eight hundred well-armed horsemen which he had collected in Germany. Duke Erik had likewise assembled an army from Upland, and after the expiration of the truce, both the Dukes crossed the Danish frontier into Skåne, burning and ravaging the land. They quartered their men for the winter, and mercilessly plundered the unfortunate peasantry for their support. The Dukes caused the whole of the province of West Gothland likewise to be ravaged, that the Danish monarch on entering the province with his troops should find no provisions. But this did not alter the Danish King's mind, who, in the summer of 1308, again entered the kingdom with a great army. The Dukes advanced towards him, but when all expected that a bloody battle would follow, a new truce was concluded for a longer period than before, and the King and his brothers were to settle their differences in a personal interview. The Dukes on this summoned a Diet at Örebro, where it was determined that if Birger would forswear his enmity to his brothers, and promise no more to disturb Sweden, he should be set at liberty and regain a third part of the kingdom. They then despatched a messenger to him to Nyköping, who willingly agreed to all their propositions, and confirmed his promises by an oath as well as by his hand and seal. On accepting these conditions, the doors of his prison were opened to him (1308), and this was the second reconciliation.

CHAPTER VII.

THIRD WAR AND THIRD RECONCILIATION.

SCARCELY had King Birger and his Queen been set free from their prison, than they hastened to Denmark to deplore their misfortunes to King Erik, and ask his assistance to regain the whole kingdom. Thus their first action was to break their promise and their oath. King Erik, however, still took further compassion of his unhappy brother-in-law, and despatched another great army which from Skåne broke into Sweden. The Dukes saw it would be impossible for them to withstand such superior forces, but pursued the plan of ravaging the country before the Danish troops, that they might be famished in it, and besides they fell on the stragglers and cut them off. In this way they passed through Småland. At Holaweden, the Dukes seemed determined to make a serious resistance, but as Matts Kettilmundson was riding before the troops, his horse stumbled and fell with his rider, so that the stalk of the banner he carried was broken in his hand. This was thought to be so bad an omen, that the Dukes did not dare to venture a battle, and withdrew till another opportunity. The two Kings by this means advanced to Nyköping which they undertook to besiege; but there they met with so strong an opposition, that though they lay three months before the Castle, it was to no purpose. Meanwhile, the Danish troops began to long for their return home; and to crown all, provisions began utterly to fail in the entirely ruined country, wherefore King Erik was forced to draw back to his land again without having gained anything by the great expenses he had made. The fol-

lowing year a meeting was held at Helsingborg, where a new peace was concluded, on condition that King Birger should receive the third of his kingdom, and a sincere reconciliation should take place between the brothers. This was the third reconciliation.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FOURTH WAR.

AFTER this time, King Birger lived without much consideration in his kingdom, and it sometimes happened that his subjects would not pay their taxes. He set off for Gothland with a small army to force the rich Gothlanders, out of their abundance, to pay him a heavier tax than ever; but this attempt succeeded so ill, that he was beaten by them and taken prisoner. They soon released him, however, but refused to pay more than before; and this expedition was thought very disgraceful to the King. The Dukes gained great worship by the pomp and magnificence in which they lived, particularly Erik, even though he borrowed money for the purpose on every hand. They celebrated their marriages in Norway in 1312, when Waldemar was married to Ingeborg, King Håkan's niece, and Erik to the same King's only daughter, the Princess Ingeborg, to whom he had been formerly engaged; but from whom he had been for some time parted on account of his faithlessness to her father. The brothers now kept each their separate Court, and to support them magnificently laid on new and very heavy taxes on the people. These were miserably poor after all they had suffered from the Duke's foreign and domestic troops, and the marching and plundering of both

friends and enemies. Never were the inhabitants of Sweden so heavily oppressed as at that time; the clergy, who otherwise had always been exempted, were forced to submit to many uncommon charges, while the servants and courtiers of the Dukes flourished at their expense; for they received gifts of horses, arms, fine cloths, with other precious effects at the numerous tournaments and various gay entertainments which were given.

Such was the state of things for several years till 1317, when Duke Waldemar undertook a journey to Stockholm which belonged to his third of the division of the kingdom. He stopped on his way at Nyköping to visit the King, his brother, whom he had not seen for a long time. King Birger went out to meet him, bidding him a friendly welcome, with every other mark of friendship and kindness; and Queen Martha received him equally well. The Duke greatly pleased with these testimonies of regard passed the night with them. In the evening, Queen Martha complained bitterly to him of "Duke Erik's avoiding his brother, Birger, which caused her great pain, for God knew she loved him as much as if he were her own brother." The following morning, Waldemar, much delighted with his entertainment rode away with his train, who had also been very well treated. From Stockholm he proceeded direct to his brother Erik in Westmanland, who related to him that he had just received an invitation from the King, and asked Waldemar if he thought he could accept it safely. Of this Waldemar made not the least doubt, relating how well he had been himself received; and though Erik long made objections, saying, that he dreaded the Queen and the Chancellor Brunke, it was finally decided that

they should accept the King's invitation. They set out, but when they had reached Swärta, six miles from Nyköping, a knight met them who warned them, saying, "They would cause themselves and their friends much sorrow if both Dukes trusted themselves in the King's hands at the same time." To this Waldemar indignantly replied, that, "There were but too many who wanted to breed disunion between the brothers." The knight added never a word and rode off, and the Dukes entered Swärta where they proposed to sleep that night. When they came there, they found no preparations made; but a knight awaiting them, who saluted them in the King's name with many entreaties and fair words, requesting that they would not repose before they came to Nyköping; for the King had no rest till he should see them, so great was his longing for their arrival. The Dukes did as the messenger required, and rode on the same evening to Nyköping. The King went out to meet them, greeted them with much kindness and courtesy, and taking one by each hand led them up to the Castle. A magnificent feast was already prepared there, and good entertainment, at which neither mead, wine, nor fair and sweet words were wanting. Duke Waldemar began, at last, to suspect the intention of this long feasting, and said to his brother that they had drunk too much wine. But this was soon forgotten. Everything was arranged for pleasure and jollity; and never had Queen Martha been seen so gay as this evening. When night was far advanced, it was time to separate, and the Dukes went to repose; but, the Queen said to their men, that "their lodging was prepared in the town as there was too little place, for them in the Castle;" whereon all the Dukes' servants were led out; and Johan Brunke stood

himself at the gate, took care that every one passed out, and carefully shut the Castle gates behind them. After this he armed the King's servants with cross-bows, swords, and other weapons, leading them up to the King. But Birger, who was still undecided, made them retire, and calling Sir Knut Johanson Blå, grandson of Iwar Blå, asked him if he would assist him in taking the Dukes prisoners. To this Knut Johanson answered, solemnly:

"Be not angry my Lord, but I will counsel you against it as far as my power extends. He who has given you this counsel has advised a great treachery. Will you deceive and murder your brothers who have come here on your word? The devil himself has certainly sought to seduce you. Let him who will be angry on this account, I will never help you in it." Then said the King being highly irritated, "Small care hast thou for my honour!" But Knut answered, "For what may conduce to your honour, but little will accrue to you from this; and I believe that should you carry through your intentions, your honour will be less hereafter." On which he left the King. There were also two other knights who seriously warned the King; but he was so displeased that he ordered them immediately to prison. On this he had his men provided with torches, and so they proceeded to the sleeping apartment of the Dukes. They awoke at the noise of breaking up the door, and Waldemar leapt up, threw on a cloak, for they had already lain down, but the soldiers to the number of ten entered at the same moment, and some of them wanted to attack Waldemar immediately; but he seized one by the middle and threw him down calling to his brother for help. Erik, who saw so many armed men around him, said, "Let alone, brother, for struggling here will

nought avail ;” and so they both yielded without resistance, hoping to receive quarter. The King now came rushing in, with starting eyes and in a savage mood. “Do you remember Hätuna ?” he cried. “Full well do I remember it, and this will not be better for you than that was for me, for you shall get the same fate, though it has tarried so long.” On this he saw their hands tied, and had them conveyed bare-footed, deep into the tower, where they were delivered over to Wallram Skytte, who fastened a great chain on their legs.

At early dawn Johan Brunke went down into the town, having with him many armed men who took the Dukes’ men and servants prisoners, and carried them up to the Castle, where they were thrust into one ward to the number of twenty. Their possessions, horses, arms, and clothes, the courtiers divided among themselves ; and when this was done, the King clapped his hands for joy, saying : “The Holy Ghost bless my Queen ! Now I have all Sweden in my hand ! ”

Some time after the King set out to reconquer the kingdom ; and left his brothers meanwhile under the care of a Livonian knight who placed them in the lowest dungeon, and put a beam on their legs. They were fastened to the wall by thick irons round the throat, and chains one hundred and forty pounds weight were riveted on their wrists, the other end of which was attached to the beam. When the link was closed on Erik, it was done with such violence, that a piece broke out, and struck him so hard on the eye, that the blood ran down his cheek and over his breast. Their prison was the very bottom of the tower on the bare rock, and a pool of water was between them. Wretched were the clothes they had, and wretched was their food, so that it could by every token be judged that their brother had no great desire that they should come out alive.

CHAPTER IX.

THE END OF THE BROTHERS' ENMITY.

KING BIRGER now caused his emissaries to speed over the land proclaiming him sole lord and master, and he himself rode up to Stockholm to take possession of its Castle; but the fame of his odious treachery and crime had flown before him, and excited general detestation. The burghers shut the city gates in his face, armed themselves, and letting down the drawbridge made a sally, chasing him over the whole of the Norrmalm,* so that he was obliged to make a shameful flight to Nyköping. Such was his reception at Stockholm; and the rest of the country rose with one accord against their traitorous and cruel monarch. Birger Persson of Finnsta set himself at the head of the Uplanders; Karl of the Smalanders, Sir Matts Kettilmundson headed the West Gothlanders, and all turned towards Nyköping to deliver the imprisoned Dukes, and punish the King. And now Birger began to perceive that he had but small joy of his ill-deed. He locked the door of the tower in which the Princes lay, and in his desperation flung the keys into the deep stream, where they could never again be found, and rode away from the Castle. But the Dukes never left it alive; and it is the general belief that they died of starvation in their prison. Erik who was sick and wounded, died on the third day; but Waldemar dragged through eleven days before death put an end to his sufferings.

Birger's son, Prince Magnus, had meanwhile been in Denmark, and had no share in his father's treachery; but hastened now to his help with six hundred well

* A well known part of Stockholm.

armed cavaliers whom Erik, King of Denmark, lent him. With these the young Prince came quietly travelling through the land seeking his foes alone. When King Birger had collected sufficient troops, he went through Gothaland laying heavy contributions on the peasantry on pain of fire; but he avoided the Duke's people wherever he met them. At Karlebylänga, a large body of West Gothlanders came on him with whom, fearing to engage, he agreed to a truce for three days. But when a great body of the peasants had gone home seeking provender and provision, the King attacked the others treacherously in the middle of the peace, so that a number of the peasantry were cut to pieces; and in the evening he set the village on fire, that he might the better see to pursue them. After this feat, he thought he had triumphed over his enemies, and drew back to East Gothland where he quartered his Danes in the towns. Ere long, however, Knut Porze of Halland came at the head of the Duke's men, surprised and conquered part of the soldiers, which when the rest of the troops heard, they made a speedy retreat home leaving the King to himself. He now knew no resource but with his Queen and Brunke to fly to Gothland, after placing his son, young Prince Magnus, in Stegeborg with a good garrison.

Of the whole kingdom only Nyköping and Stegeborg remained to the King, both of which were hardly beset. Finally the besieged in Nyköping took the dead bodies of both the Dukes, and carrying them under a dais out of the Castle, left them to the besiegers saying, that "their siege now could answer no purpose, since the Dukes their masters were dead, and the King had; after them, inherited the whole kingdom." But they answered, "that no one need think of getting an inheri-

tance by murder, and that they now served Lord Magnus, Duke Erik's son." The bodies of the murdered Princes were carried to Stockholm where they were buried with state; but Erik had incurred such heavy debts, that the Archbishop declared he could not refuse to give up his body, according to the custom of that day, to his creditors if they should require it. Nyköping was meanwhile more closely besieged, so that the garrison at last surrendered; on which the Castle was razed to the ground by the enraged people. In this fortress Magnus Ladulas had imprisoned his King and elder brother, Waldemar; there too his own eldest son, King Birger, was imprisoned by his brothers; and finally they, in turn, were by the latter as treacherously imprisoned and tortured to death.

Stegeborg held out longer against the enemy. The King despatched a number of ships from Gothland with supplies of provision and troops; but no sooner had these vessels entered the Skares than they were attacked and taken, and the booty divided amongst the enemy, and Prince Magnus remained in as much need as before. When this was told the King, the Queen turned both white and red, and exclaimed, "Where shall we now turn, since God has sent us such a misfortune?" But Johan Brunke answered that he would himself set out, and no more spare the Duke's people than they had spared the King's. On this he entered the first vessels he could find, caused them to be planked in all round, and loading them with provision and the rest of the King's forces sailed for Stegeborg. When he entered the Skares, he was attacked with stones and every sort of missile, notwithstanding which Brunke defended himself manfully behind the rails. Seeing this, the Duke's men made lofty floats of wood which

they lighted and drifted towards the ships. The King's men long kept off the fire by means of iron poles and boat-hooks, but they were at last exhausted, their defensive weapons destroyed, and three of the largest vessels caught fire which spread from ship to ship, and was not to be extinguished. Then Sir Brunke and all his men leapt into the water hoping to save themselves by swimming; but the Duke's people seized hold of them, and Brunke, Wallram Skytte, Ulf Swalebeck, and Lyder Foss were sent to Stockholm where they were cast into prison. Meanwhile the siege of Stegeborg advanced with all diligence; the wall was breached by the culverins, provisions began to fail, and the garrison was at last obliged to surrender, on condition that the life of the young Magnus should be safe. Stegeborg was entirely destroyed and Magnus carried to Stockholm and confined in the same castle where he nineteen years before was born as it appeared to such great power, glory, and happiness.

Meanwhile Sir Matts Kettilmundson, at a Diet in Skara (1318), was chosen Administrator of the kingdom, and acted with such energy that by his care a Danish army which King Erik equipped for Birger's assistance was beaten, and not only that, but the whole of Skåne ravaged by the Swedes. On this he travelled to Stockholm where Johan Brunke and his three companions underwent a short trial which ended in their being condemned to be beheaded. This was immediately carried into execution on a high sand-bank, which then lay at the Norrmalm, the greater part of which is now dug away. But since that day the place retains the name of Brunkeberg.

Shortly after Prince Magnus Birgeron was led down from the Castle to the Helgeandsholm, and there

desired to make his confession, for he was, by his death, to pay the penalty of his father's crime. In vain he pleaded his innocence of his father's treachery; the Lords cared nought for this, neither for the oath they had sworn him of security for life and limb at Stegeborg; neither that they formerly, in King Birger's time, had paid homage to him as their future sovereign. He was obliged to bow his innocent head to the axe.

The Administrator now equipped a fleet with which to attack King Birger in Gothland, intending to make him endure the same hard lot as his brothers. He had, however, in company of his Queen made his escape to Denmark; but on arriving there they found that their former aid and protector King Erik was dead, and his brother King Christopher did not receive them very warmly. However, for the sake of their relationship, he granted them the Spikaborg Castle where they lived awhile; but when the news reached them of the death of their only son Prince Magnus, it caused the King so much grief that he was soon laid on his death-bed. Queen Martha lived long, but only to deplore her crimes, and her misfortunes.

And now of the posterity of Magnus Ladulas, Duke Erik's son, Magnus, a child of four years old, alone remained.

BOOK VI.

EXTINCTION OF THE FOLKLINGAR DYNASTY.

CHAPTER I.

MAGNUS SMEK.

THE partisans of Matts Kettilmundson, and those of the late Princes summoned a Diet at Upsala in 1319, at which the young Prince Magnus was elected at the Mora Stones, and received the homage of the whole assembled people. This Diet is remarkable from having been the first to which both the nobility, clergy, burghers, and peasants were called. Häkan, King of Norway, died at this time, and Magnus being his daughter's son and only heir, he succeeded him and thus in his earliest childhood became sovereign of both the Northern kingdoms, a power which none had possessed since the days of Sigurd Ring.

During the King's minority, the kingdom was governed by some of the chief lords who had, at Skara in 1322, signed an agreement for mutual support and assistance, especially against Knut Porze in Halland, whose power appeared to them too dangerous, particularly on account of the favour the King's mother showed him, whom he even married in 1327, spite of the opposition of the senators. However they succeeded in restraining any further attempts of his ambition; and with the exception of this dispute, the land was kept in peace and tranquillity.

Denmark during the last years of this minority was sunk in great troubles. Christopher had no means to make head against his many enemies, but had been obliged, partly as pledges for sums received, partly as accommodations, to part with many of the dependencies of Denmark. By this means, Skane had been made over to Duke John of Holstein, Halland to Knut Porze and so on. But the Holsteiners mal-treating the Scanians, paying no regard to their laws and customs, they rebelled, and came at last to open warfare, so that three hundred Germans were at one time cut down in the Cathedral of Lund. As the Scanians, however, perceived that they need not flatter themselves with hopes of assistance from the Danish monarch, they addressed themselves to King Magnus of Sweden, with whom they had a conference in Calmar in 1332. They then placed themselves under the Swedish crown on condition that Magnus should confirm their privileges, and defend them against foreign invasion. Besides this, the Swedish crown was obliged to pay to the Duke of Holstein, and others who had lent on security, the sums they had to claim on the land, which amounted to seventy thousand marks of silver. By this means, Skane as well as a part of Halland and Bleking, were joined to the kingdom, so that Magnus, on attaining his majority in 1333, was also sovereign of the whole Northern peninsula.

Matts Kettilmundson who had most contributed in keeping the provinces together, died the following year; still for some time Magnus appeared to reign with firmness. A new book of laws which had been so long in hand was completed in 1347; it was called *Meddellag*, but was not then acted upon, as the clergy set themselves against it as at variance with the canonical laws and their privileges.

King Magnus, in 1335, was married to the Duchess Blanche of Namur, and she made him the father of two sons, Erik and Håkan. His sister Euphemia was married in 1336 to Albrecht, Duke of Mecklenburg. King Waldemar Otterdag who now reigned in Denmark, twice formerly resigned all pretensions to Hålland, Skåne and Bleking, and many of his principal subjects went bail for him that he should keep his promise.*

Notwithstanding these good appearances, a general dissatisfaction began to arise and increase against Magnus. Disputes often took place between him and the powerful senators which he had neither the sense to avoid, nor the power to subdue. Their envy was excited by the great favour shown by both the King and Queen to Bengt Algotson, a man of mean birth, but of a proud and imperious disposition. Magnus likewise fell into contempt by allowing himself to be governed by his wicked and ambitious Queen; but what most contributed to disgrace him was the light and even licentious life he led in his Court, and some believe for this reason he gained the surname Smek. A meeting was last held in Skenninge in 1312, in which the eldest Prince, Erik, was named and received homage as his father's successor and co-regent in Sweden; and Håkan the youngest was installed in the same way in Norway, so that by this means the union of the kingdoms was annulled.

As Erik however was but a child, Magnus reigned. Meanwhile Esthonia and Livonia being torn by internal dissensions, he determined to try his fortune there and

* As Kings used so shamelessly to break their word solemnly pledged on oath, it was customary, at that time, to have sureties who offered bail for them, and even engaged to force their sovereign to keep his faith.

hired foreign troops to his aid against the express warning of St. Brigitta. She begged him first to seek for and remedy the injustice and disorders practised in his own kingdom before he thought of foreign conquest; and if he indeed wanted to prove his zeal for the heathen in Esthonia, not to take hirelings, but born Swedes,* and such as would accompany him freely for the love of God; otherwise it would go ill with his undertaking. ●

The money for this expedition was lent by the priests. The King set out in 1348, and on his arrival in Russia, took Nöteborg where he made five hundred prisoners. These he caused to be shaved and baptized; and then let them go free, on the promise of a considerable ransom. But they returned after awhile with a great army of Russians, and succeeded in surrounding the Swedes, so that the King was obliged to dig his way out, and could barely make his escape with part of his fleet. Those who remained behind, as well as the whole garrison of Nöteborg, were cut to pieces; and such was the end of this campaign.

CHAPTER II.

THE PLAGUE.

AT this period a terrible pestilence had commenced to spread itself over the known world. In Sweden it was called the Diger-Death, that is the Great Death. It came from India, and in 1348 made such ravages in the South of Europe, that barely a third of the population survived. A continual south-wind* brought thick and damp vapours with it; the air was never cleared by storms and rain, and oft-repeated earthquakes, and signs

in the air boded a great convulsion in nature. This plague attacked man and beast alike; but the young died most. Boils broke out under the armpits, which were followed by spitting of blood; and after three days, inevitable death. In 1349, a ship on board of which no living creature was found was driven towards Bergen on the coast of Norway. The citizens thoughtlessly unloaded the vessel, which being infected by the plague spread the malady with alarming rapidity which ravaged both Sweden and Norway during the year 1350. No family, and no rank escaped; whole parishes perished; in West Gothland four hundred and sixty-six priests died, and the King's two half brothers fell victims to it. In the mining districts of Wermland, one man and two girls alone survived; and many and many a mile now divided the nearest neighbours. After this devastation wide tracts of land fell to the crown for want of heirs; and other districts became a wilderness which the wood soon covered, so that even yet in the centre of deep forests remains of houses and fields which have remained forgotten from that time are occasionally discovered. It once happened long after the Diger Death, that a peasant in Eksparish went out early one morning in spring to shoot the capercaillie in a thick wood. As he missed the bird, he went to seek the arrow, which had fallen, as he thought, on a high moss-covered rock; but when the peasant reached the place, he found it was a Church which had remained forgotten and forsaken, and was buried in trees. This plague stopped at last; but left great misery in the land, and much discontent with the King, a visitation on whose sins the people believed it to have been.

CHAPTER III.

MAGNUS SNEK'S END.

MEANWHILE the enmity between King Magnus and the senators increased to such a degree, that they addressed themselves to King Erik who often disapproved of his father's proceedings, and even drove Bengt Algotson with a strong hand out of the kingdom in 1356, without caring for either father or mother, who were highly enraged in consequence, as it is even said that Queen Blanche set out for Denmark, and entered into an agreement with King Waldemar to restore Skåne to him, if he would help her favourite Bengt Algotson back to the kingdom again. This, however, was not put into execution, for the following year 1357, a reconciliation was arranged between the father and son, and the kingdom divided between them. Magnus was, however, soon again offended, and went with Blanche to Waldemar in Denmark seeking his help, on the promise of Skåne. The young King Håkan of Norway was now betrothed to Margaret, King Waldemar's daughter. Waldemar fell upon Skåne, but the land was soon reconquered by King Erik and some Swedes hurriedly armed with clubs, whence this was called the Club-troop. Magnus gained nothing by this, save the hatred and ruin of his subjects, and was forced to conclude a new peace with Erik in Söderköping (1359). Queen Blanche was by this time irritated in the highest measure at all the impediments her son laid in way of her plans. She invited him therefore with his young Queen Beatrix to pass the Christmas with her, and poisoned them both in the midst of the festivities, and her false demonstrations of motherly love. Beatrix

died immediately, together with the child of which she was pregnant; but Erik combated with his sufferings for twenty days, when he died, saying: "She who gave me life, has also deprived me of it."

A general horror of this crime spread itself over the kingdom, and the Swedes were soon made to feel the further consequences of Erik's death. Waldemar got possession of Skåne and Bleking, and Magnus gave him back these provinces which had cost Sweden such heavy sums, at a meeting at Brömsebro, for nothing (1360.) He made no attempt to hinder the fearful ravages with which Waldemar afflicted the islands of Gothland and Öland; and it has even been surmised that the expedition to Gothland was at the instigation of Magnus, who thus wanted to punish the inhabitants for their pride. Waldemar made a terrible incursion, and Wisby was entirely plundered by him. He forced the people to fill three of the largest ale-barrels in the town with gold and silver; but the ship which was carrying the greater part of the spoil home to Denmark was wrecked and all was lost.

As Magnus had committed violence against the clergy, and also left his debt to the Pope unpaid, he was finally excommunicated. This, however, made no impression upon him, for he entered the Churches by force in which service was going on, adding by this means to the horror the people already entertained for him. Bengt, who had been so much hated before for his avarice and oppression, returned to the kingdom soon after Erik's death, but was attacked and murdered by the people in Skåne. Finally (1362) the Senators chose Håkan, who already reigned in Norway for their King. He, to do them pleasure, broke his engagement with Margaret Waldemar's daughter, and was to marry

Elizabeth, a Duchess of the House of Holstein. Many noble Swedish lords were sent to meet her, and she was formally betrothed to King Håkan. He also made his father prisoner in Calmar Cathedral; but made a reconciliation soon after with both Magnus and Waldemar. Elizabeth, who had sailed for Sweden was driven by stress of weather to Denmark, and was there kept prisoner by Waldemar, together with the Swedish lords. Meanwhile Magnus and Håkan set out for Denmark, where the latter was married to Margaret. Elizabeth and her fellow-prisoners could only be freed by force of arms by the Duke of Mecklenburg; but she had taken the world in such disgust on account of this treachery, that she would not return home to her friends, but shut herself up in the Convent of Wadstena, devoting her time to prayer and her fortune to charity. On the return of the Swedish nobles, indignant at Håkan's treachery in again giving up Skane, they entered into a league against him. Duke Henry of Holstein, wrathful at the contempt which had been shown his sister, fortified Calmar which he had as a fief, and summoned the Swedish lords, who had acted as sureties for Håkan, to keep their promise. These then elected the Judge of Upland, Israel Birgersson, Saint Brigitta's brother, as King, a man who was as much considered for his high descent and riches, as for his justice and mildness. He refused their offer however, not desiring such an uncertain honour. The Lords were now banished by Magnus and Håkan, and hastened to the Duke of Holstein offering him the Swedish Crown (1363); but he excused himself on account of his great age, and advised them to address themselves to one of the sons of the Duke of Mecklenburg, who, by their mother Euphemia, were grandsons of the unfortunate Duke

Erik. The Lords followed this counsel, and the Duke of Mecklenburg accepted their offer for his eldest son Albrecht, who was in consequence elected King of Sweden. The Duke equipped a fleet on which Albrecht, and the banished gentlemen returned to Sweden. The Castle of Stockholm soon surrendered, and a Diet was assembled there in 1363, in which the election of Albrecht was confirmed, and he received homage the following year at the Mora Stones; but Magnus and Hakan still maintained themselves in the kingdom of Gotha. In this manner the kingdom had three Kings at once during the space of two years, till Magnus and Hakan at last collected an army with which they marched against Stockholm. Their advance-guard was attacked by Albrecht's troops in Gata Forest, on the west of Euköping, while the greater part of Hakan's army was meanwhile eating, drinking, singing, and enjoying themselves in Westeras. The battle was very severe, Hakan was wounded and his people driven back to Nyqwarn, where, to cut off pursuit, he caused the bridge to be pulled down, and was thus the means of his father, with the troops yet in his company on the other side, being taken prisoners. Hakan fled to Norway; but Magnus was put into strict confinement in Stockholm, living six years a prisoner in the same castle where he had reigned thirty-six years as sovereign of the North. King Hakan did his best to get his father's deliverance; and succeeded at last, but at the expense of a heavy ransom. Magnus then accompanied Hakan to Norway where he was more loved than in Sweden, and lived there some years in peace and quiet; but being once on a sea-voyage to the islands off Bergen, a violent storm arose in which the ship was lost, and every soul on board perished (A.D. 1371).

Thus ended the Folkungar dynasty in Sweden, which for one hundred and twenty years had filled the country with war and bloodshed ; for not a King of this race is to be found who did not commit violence on, and act treacherously by his nearest relations, father, brother, and children. They were the cause of their own ruin by their persecutions of each other, to the degree that no noble branch remained of a family once so numerous. In East Gothland, in Skärkind Parish alone, a remnant of this mighty race remained as peasants, and are yet distinguished by the pride, disunion, and hardness of their forefathers.

BOOK VII.

THE HOLY BRIGITTA.

CHAPTER I.

SAINT BRIGITTA'S FAMILY.

THE Judge of Upland was always a person of consequence in the country. During King Birger's reign this office was filled by Birger Persson of Finnstad, a very rich and powerful man, of high birth and known integrity, so that he was greatly considered in public affairs. By his second marriage with Ingeborg, daughter of Bengt, Judge of East Gothland and Sigrid the Fair, he was nearly connected with the royal family. He bore two eagle's wings on his shield, and is supposed to be the ancestor of the noble house of Brahe. As a proof of Birger's riches and the customs of that time, it may be quoted that at his funeral the following articles were consumed: one pound and a half of saffron, twelve pounds of cummin, six pounds of pepper, ninety pounds of almonds, one hundred and five pounds of rice, four pounds of sugar, seven barrels of herrings, and three firkins of wine.

Birger had several children by his last marriage, of whom the most remarkable was Brigitta, or Brita, who afterwards became so famous as to be considered a saint. We will here relate her life as the monks tell it. From her earliest infancy, her future greatness was an-

nounced by many miracles. She was three years dumb, but then at once spake with a clearness and comprehension which surprised every one. Her parents were very pious according to the religion of the times: confessed often, fasted, mortified, and flagellated themselves; built Churches, gave alms, and held up to their children the pattern of a zealous and ardent piety. This worked on Brigitta especially. When after her mother's death she went to live with her aunt, Lady Ingrid at Aspenäs, and was not above seven years old, she thought one night she saw an altar before her bed. The Virgin Mary stood above the altar in shining clothes, and held a precious crown in her hand, saying, "Brigitta, come!" She went, and the Virgin said: "Wilt thou have this crown?" to which, when Brigitta had bowed assent, Mary put the crown on her head. When Brigitta returned to bed, the vision vanished from her eyes; but she always retained in her memory a feeling of bliss which flowed through her as the crown touched her head. From that time she became more constant and ardent in her prayers. Her aunt, Lady Ingrid, who entered her room one night unobserved, found her kneeling and weeping before a crucifix, knew not what to think of it, and lifted the rod in a threatening attitude over Brigitta; but it broke in her hand. Then the Lady Ingrid surprised, said, "What dost thou, Brigitta?" She related her visions and her devotions in answer, and her aunt from that moment revered her. It is even said that it often happened, as the maidens were sitting embroidering together, that Brigitta would fall into such deep and godly meditations, that she remained absorbed in herself, entirely forgetting her work; but the rest at such times perceived an unknown woman to appear and

work for her; and when the work was afterwards examined, it seemed finer and better than a human hand could have done it; but when Brigitta was questioned on the subject, she said she had seen nothing.

CHAPTER II.

SAINT BRIGITTA'S MARRIAGE.

Thus grew this holy maiden, blooming and pure as a lily, and as much admired for her beauty as for her great piety. At thirteen years of age, at her father's earnest request, she was married to Ulf Gudmarsson of Ulfasa, who was then not more than eighteen. Notwithstanding their youth, their union was remarkable for zeal, and voluntary mortification of the flesh, for Ulf was himself a very pious gentleman. Brigitta got a learned man to translate the whole Bible for her into Swedish, that she might be able to read it, and it formed her daily pleasure. In the intervals of her devotions, she visited the churches and convents, and took an especial care of the poor, for whom she built large and convenient houses on her estates. At last she and her husband determined, for their soul's salvation, to undertake a pilgrimage to St. Jago or Compostello, in Spain, where the monks say the Apostle James is buried. They accomplished this journey at great expense, and with much danger and fatigue. In France, Ulf Gudmarsson fell dangerously ill; but making, on the point of death, the vow to become a monk, he soon recovered, and they both returned home again. Ulf then gave up his worldly avocations, (he had been Judge in Nerike,) and entered Alwastra Cloister, where he passed his time in prayer and penitence till his death, which took

place in 1344. He and St. Brigitta had been the parents of eight children, four sons and four daughters.

After this Brigitta led a yet harder life, and becoming more and more inspired, she often thought she saw spirits and spoke with them; and being more holy, generous, and just than others, it did not seem extraordinary to her that she should enjoy so great a grace. Once when she was thus in ecstasy, she thought she saw a shining cloud, out of which came a voice, saying: "I am the Lord thy God, who will speak with thee, and thou shalt be my messenger." At this she was strangely moved; but the voice spoke further, saying: "Fear not, I am the Creator of all things, and no deceiver; neither do I speak for thy sake alone, but for the salvation of many. List, therefore, to what I say, and tell it to Master Matthias, who by my grace, and his own experience, has learnt to distinguish between the spirit of truth, and the spirit of lies." After this she often imagined she had revelations and conversations with Christ and the Virgin Mary, which conversations she afterwards related to Master Matthias, who wrote them down, by which means they have come to posterity.

Brigitta was obliged to pass some time at Court, where she became superintendent of Queen Blanche's household; she could not however endure the follies and vices she saw practised around her, but read many a warning lecture to the King and the Court, and told her revelations of the punishment which should overtake sinners. But Magnus made jest of her speech, and often asked in sport, "what his friend had dreamt of him to-night?" As she found herself unable to accomplish anything, she retired from Court and went to live on her estates in the severest penance. Ever since her husband's death, she never wore linen but hair-cloth

next her skin. A thin mat was spread before her bed with a footstool for a pillow, on which she used to lie, and when she was asked how she was able to endure the bitter cold, she answered, "I feel so much warmth within, that I care little for the external cold." Every Friday, in memory of Christ's sufferings, she caused burning wax to be dropped on her bare arm, and if the sores healed too soon, she tore them up with her nails. As often as she spoke a heedless word, she kept a bitter herb in her mouth for the punishment of her tongue. She waited on twelve poor people daily at their dinner, and every Thursday she used to wash their feet.

As many of her relations reproached her for all this, and began to consider her as mad, she answered: "I neither began, nor do I intend to finish this for your sakes. I have determined in my soul not to care for what man may say. As for you, pray for me that I may continue in it."

CHAPTER III.

OF SAINT BRIGITTA'S TRAVELS AND DEATH.

Two years after her husband's death, Brigitta had a vision in which Christ spoke to her, saying: "Go to Rome, for there the streets are paved with everlasting gold: that is, the blood of the martyrs and saints. There by the merits of the saints, and the absolution of the Pope, lies the shortest way to Heaven. In Rome thou shalt remain till thou hast seen the Pope and the Emperor." On this exhortation, Brigitta made herself ready for the journey (1346) and reached Rome; but never returned to her native land. She lived there many years, and visited all the holy places in the

country, distinguishing herself everywhere for her generosity, piety and abstinence, so that her fame spread far and near among the people. She was once called to an audience with the Pope, when she earnestly exhorted him to remove the Papal See from Avignon back to Rome. She even permitted her father-confessor to inform him what the Virgin Mary had revealed to her, that he would die immediately on going to Avignon. He however paid no attention to this, did remove, and died immediately on his arrival. This increased Brigitta's consequence not a little, so that the people imagined that whatever she did was directly prescribed to her by God.

Two of Brigitta's sons, Sir Carl and Sir Birger, came in 1370 to visit their mother in Rome; and she was permitted to present both to the Holy Father. Birger, who was more serious, had clad himself in a wide robe down to the feet with an ordinary belt round his waist, so that his dress was grave and courtly at the same time; but Sir Carl, who was a very proud and lively youth, had adorned himself in the gayest fashion of the time. His breast was covered with chains, and the collars of different orders, and a silver belt round his middle; his cloak was made of entire ermine skins which were stuffed, and had each a gold bell round the neck, and a gold ring in their mouths, so that at every movement he made, the bells rang and the stuffed ermines waved up and down as if they were alive. When the Pope looked at the brothers, he said to Sir Birger, "Thou art thy mother's child;"—but to Carl, "And thou a child of this world." Then Brigitta fell on her knees before him, and prayed the remission of sins for her sons. But the Pope touched Carl's belt, and lifted his cloak, saying: "The wearing this heavy dress is

already sufficient plague and penance." Then St. Brigitta exclaimed, "O holy father part him from his sins! I shall be able to part him from his belt!"

Some time after Brigitta related that Christ had desired her to visit the Holy Sepulchre; that she had excused herself on account of her old age and infirmities, but that Christ had answered: "Who is the Lord of nature? I shall give thee strength. I shall carry thee back, and be thy guardian." Then Brigitta determined on this journey, which took place in 1372, and her two sons Birger and Carl, her daughter Christina, and some of her nearest relations were in her company. They stopped some time in Naples, where Brigitta was received with reverence by Queen Johanna, who then governed the country. Brigitta had instructed her sons how they should advance towards the Queen, salute her respectfully, and then fall on their knees and kiss her feet, as was then the custom; and Birger acted accordingly. But when Carl had bowed to the Queen, he stepped boldly forward, and kissed her on the mouth instead of on the foot to the great horror of his pious mother and all the courtiers. But Queen Johanna instead of being angry at his presumption, took so much fancy to him, that she would not, on any account, let him leave her, and even declared that she had chosen him for her husband. Saint Brigitta objected that this could by no means be, as Sir Carl was married and had his wife at home in Sweden. But the Queen said she did not care for that, and it should be as she desired. Then was Saint Brigitta sorely grieved and afflicted, and all the more as Carl seemed to be quite ready for this double marriage. She took her refuge in God, imploring him to deliver her son from so great a crime. And her prayer was granted, for

Sir Carl soon fell sick and died. The Queen lamented him much, and caused him to be buried at her charges, as if he had been her lord and husband; but Brigitta thanked God for her son's deliverance from crime and eternal death.

After this, with the rest of her companions, she pursued her way to Jerusalem, where she visited every holy spot, though her health was failing. However she was enabled to make her way back to Rome; but immediately on her arrival her sickness increased. She often thought she had revelations, and heard the Saviour's voice strengthening and consoling her in her suffering. At last she died in 1373, seventy years of age.

CHAPTER IV.

OF SAINT BRIGITTA'S SANCTITY.

THE fame of Saint Brigitta's sanctity was so great at the time of her death, that the people streamed in throngs to the Convent of San Lorenzo in which she had died, in order to touch her body quite worn out by fasting and penance, that the funeral could not take place for two days. It was at last decided that the nuns of the convent should retain the left arm as a relic and great treasure; the rest was carried home to Sweden by her children, Birger and Catherine, and the Prior of Alwastra who had also been with her to Jerusalem. When the ships cast anchor at Söderköping, many people were collected to see and touch these holy remains; and wherever the procession stopped, the people collected around to listen to the Prior's oration on her sanctity. When the corpse approached Linköping,

the Bishop and many of the inhabitants of the town advanced in festival robes to meet the procession; the bells in every town were rung, the organs played in every Church, and a solemn mass read in the Cathedral. After this the corpse was carried to the convent in Wadstena, which Brigitta had founded before her setting out.

But several of Brigitta's relations and friends thought this was still insufficient honour for her piety, and desired that she should be canonised by the Pope. Many others in Sweden were of the same mind, that the country might have the honour of having produced a saint. Catharine therefore carried several letters to this effect to the Pope; but she could not get her demand attended to, on account of the disputes regarding a Papal election which was going on at the time. Some years after another messenger was despatched on the same errand, and the Pope then appointed a tribunal of three Cardinals who should examine the claims. Much was said of her revelations, of how she could foretel events, how she could immediately recognise sinners by a smell of sulphur which proceeded from them, and so on. Finally the Cardinals declared themselves satisfied, and the Pope appointed the 7th of October, 1391, for the canonization. The whole preceding day, as on the day itself, all the bells in the town were rung; in the morning, the Pope, followed by Patriarchs, Bishops and other prelates, went to the great chapel which was lighted with candles and torches, hung with precious cloths, and strewed with odoriferous flowers. The Pope made a speech, prayers were read, *Veni Sancti Spiritus* was sung, after which the Pope declared Brigitta a Saint, and the *Te Deum* was struck up. The following day, the Pope himself

performed mass in St. Peters, which was lighted up by thirty thousand lamps, candles and torches excepted. The third day, the Pope presented himself before the multitude, holding in his hand a golden book, in which he himself inscribed Saint Brigitta's name amongst the angels and those of the other saints. All this magnificence cost five thousand ducats. Her bones, which had been carried to Rome, were now restored to Sweden, and solemnly enshrined in 1393. The Archbishop of Upsala, bishops, priests, knights, noblemen, ladies, and damsels from the three Northern kingdoms were then collected at Wadstena. The holy relics were laid in a silver chest, which was borne by four bishops into the Church, and placed on the high altar with prayers, masses, music and much solemnity, for no native of the North had ever been canonised by the Pope before.

The convent which Brigitta had founded in Wadstena gained daily more consideration. A general tax of a penny on each person in the country was allotted to the convent by King Albrecht; it was built of stone, and in 1394 solemnly consecrated to the Virgin Mary and Saint Brigitta, who were as a couple of friends to protect the country in all its distresses. The inhabitants, who were called Brigittines, or the Order of St. Salvador, consisted of eighty-four persons, five-and-twenty monks, and sixty nuns. Their rules were said to have been presented to Saint Brigitta by Jesus Christ in person; they consisted first, as in all other convents, of the vows of chastity, obedience, and voluntary poverty. Besides this they were to lie on straw without sheets, and with only a woollen covering. Instead of linen next their skin, they were to wear a woollen shirt, and a cloak of grey serge with such long sleeves that the whole hand was covered by them. The forehead

and cheeks were covered by a cap, on which a white linen cloth was fastened. The greater part of the day they were to pass in prayers and chanting, or in a perfect silence. The rest of their time was employed in reading, writing, and sewing, for all idleness was strictly forbidden. They were to prepare themselves for the highest Church festivals by fasts on bread and water; a great part of the year they were to live on the same provisions as in Lent, and during the remainder only to eat meat four times a week, the rest of their food was vegetables, fish, and milk. As a memento of their mortality, they had a bier always standing at the church door, and an open grave in the church-yard.

None of the convents in the kingdom attained to the celebrity of that of Wadstena. Yearly pilgrimages were made to it on St. Brita's day, and many noble and royal ladies, who were persecuted by misfortune, shut themselves up here from the world, seeking in the stillness of the convent and in the exercises of devotion and penance, the forgiveness of their sins, and the peace and happiness which they had not found in the world.

These and many other pious persons often bequeathed considerable portions of their estates to the convent of Wadstena, which besides by royal ordinations and gifts of pilgrims rose to great riches. It finally attained such celebrity that many other convents were founded throughout the Northern countries for the Briggittine order, which all honoured Wadstena as the Mother Church. But these great riches proved a temptation to the inhabitants to forsake their first strict mode of life. Thus we find that during the time of the convent's greatest prosperity, they consumed yearly one hundred and twenty tons of rye, twenty-four tons of wheat, two hundred and eighty-eight tons

of malt, forty-eight tons of barley, twenty tons of butter, one hundred and twenty oxen, three hundred sheep, nine stone of pork, one hundred stone of cheese, two tons of honey, an abundance of fish, and every thing else in proportion, so that their fast does not seem to have been very severe. It is also very certain that the other vows of their order were at that time not better kept; they required greater self-denial and strength than men usually possess, and often exacted empty and useless exercises; so that they were in the end despised, and here, as in most other convents, manifold sins and vices were hidden under a veil of hypocrisy and devotion.

BOOK VIII.

KING ALBRECHT AND QUEEN MARGARET. •

CHAPTER I.

OF KING ALBRECHT.

THOUGH at the battle of Gata Forest near Euköping, Albrecht had taken Magnus Smek prisoner, his power was far from established throughout the kingdom, for the partisans of the dethroned monarch kept possession of many castles and districts of the south and west of Sweden, which gave rise to continual disturbances and war with King Håkan of Norway, who sought to assist his father. Albrecht also presently brought on himself the displeasure of both the people and nobles by his extravagance and new taxes, but yet more by the preference he showed to the Germans. Neither had he exerted himself to regain Skåne, Halland, and Bleking, but had on the contrary resigned them and other property to Waldemar, so that disappointing the expectations which had been formed of him, he was taken in general disgust. Håkan on the watch to take advantage of this, broke with a strong Norwegian army into the country; and as he found partisans in many places, and nowhere a steady resistance, he advanced as far as Stockholm, to which he laid siege. He had pitched his camp on the heights of Kungsbacken, or King's Hill, whose name yet bears testimony to his position.

Albrecht beginning now seriously to fear for his

crown, sought help from the chief nobles with whom he had before been in disgrace. The reconciliation was made in the Franciscan Church, where the King, in formal letters-patent, acknowledged: "that his servants had exercised all manner of violence towards the natives of the country, which had caused great distrust to arise between them and himself. This had certainly taken place against his will; still he granted he was wrong in not having paid sufficient attention to the complaints of his subjects; neither had he, with sufficient severity, looked after his officers, which fault he promised in future fully to amend. As a proof of further confidence, he delivered all his castles into the hands of the Senators, from whose resolves he reserved to himself no right to depart. If one of the Senators died, not he, but they had the right to nominate a successor."

Those to whom this power was granted were the Bishops, and twelve gentlemen of the Senate, among whom were Charles Ulfsson Sparre of Tofta, the Riksmarshal Erik Kettilsson Wase, and Bo Jonsson Grip, the most powerful of all.

After this paper was signed and sealed, the Lords made effective preparation for Albrecht's defence; so that Häkan losing all hope of further success concluded a peace on condition that his father, King Magnus, should be set free and receive a maintenance, in return for which both Magnus and Häkan gave up to Albrecht their pretensions to Sweden and Skåne, and paid besides twelve thousand marks of pure silver, for which sum the Norwegian Lords became bound. In this manner Magnus Smek was set at liberty, and the Swedish Castles were made over to the Senators.

CHAPTER II.

QUEEN MARGARET.

KING WALDEMAR OTTERDAG of Denmark, the same who had cajoled Magnus Smek out of Skåne, Hålland, and Bleking, had three children, Christopher, Margaret, and Ingeborg. Margaret was in no wise good-looking, being of a dark complexion, more like a man than a woman, and strong both in body and mind, whence her father used to say, that nature had mistaken in making her a woman. As has been already told, she was betrothed to King Håkan of Norway, Magnus Smek's son in her early infancy. This marriage, spite of many impediments, was finally celebrated in 1365, so that Margaret bore the crowns of Sweden and Norway on her head at the age of eleven years, and her brother Christopher dying during the celebration of the rejoicings attendant on her marriage, she and her sister became the inheritrices of Denmark. She was now sent with her husband to Norway, but still being very young and childish, a governess was placed over her, who was Lady Martha, daughter of Saint Brigitta. Under her care, Queen Margaret grew up, together with the Lady Martha's daughter Ingegerd; and as the said Lady was very strict, the Queen and the maiden were often made to smart under the same rod; but a steady friendship and attachment existed ever after between them.

When King Waldemar died in 1375, Prince Olof, Margaret and Håkan's only son, was elected King, but being yet but a child, his mother was appointed Regent. Five years after (1380,) Håkan died, when Margaret became her son's guardian. At last in 1387, this Olof

himself died, and thus Margaret inherited both the kingdoms of Norway and Denmark, and though other Princes strove to wrest them from her, she knew how to counteract their efforts, and retained by her might and her judgment, what she had received from birth and fortune.

CHAPTER III.

OF ALBRECHT'S GOVERNMENT.

KING ALBRECHT loved the great Lords but little for the laws for their own advantage they had compelled him to sign; he therefore turned to his countrymen, the Germans, whom he encouraged to come into the kingdom, and preferred by every means in his power. Our old chronicles complain bitterly of this, saying: "Whoever came from Germany and could dance and sing, immediately got one hundred marks of silver, and cloaks and gilded bells. Even though these foreigners were of low degree, the King called them *Uncle* and *friend*, to give them more consequence, and get them all the rich marriages in the land." But the Swedish nobles seldom experienced any favour. The peasantry suffered cruelly, for the German soldiery, who came into the country, committed the greatest crimes unpunished, and excited the utmost hatred by their lawless conduct.

The King increased these feelings by keeping such a magnificent and splendid Court, that his revenues were far from sufficient; this made him often impose new taxes, which were very ill-received; and when these did not suffice, he borrowed money on the right hand and left.

During this time Bo Jonsson Grip had become a very mighty and powerful man, and was as it were the

head and leader of the Senate, which held almost every fortress in the country in their hands. His power was such that the King dared not gainsay it, and he summoned and presided at Diets without either the King's knowledge or consent. A complete license grew out of this ; and whoever had sufficient power committed the greatest crimes unpunished. Matts Gustafsson murdered Bishop Gottskalk, at Linderås Church (1372) ; and spite of the influence and excommunications of the priests, suffered no severer punishment than seven years after giving up some land to Linköping Church. Bo Jonsson Grip himself, excited by a burning jealousy, murdered Sir Carl Nicklasson Ferla before the high altar in the Franciscan Church at Stockholm ; and it was never said that any one dared on that account to accuse or fine him.

Thus the kingdom seemed at the mercy of wind and wave driving on to its ruin ; but of all the classes the peasants suffered most. These were either on the lands of the clergy or nobility, or else on crown lands. The first mentioned suffered least, as the churches and convents treated them with more mercy than the nobles, who used their people like slaves. But the crown-peasants suffered worst and most, for they were often wronged and plundered by the King's stewards and others, and had none to protect them but the law and King Albrecht ; both equally helpless. When they came to Albrecht imploring, " Sweet Sir King, get us our rights !" he answered. " Ich kan nicht bettern min leue knekt ;" " I can't help it, my dear fellow." With which answer the peasants were obliged to retire accompanied by the ridicule and laughter of the courtiers.

CHAPTER IV.

WAR BETWEEN ALBRECHT AND MARGARET.

THE powerful Bo Jonsson died in 1386, and left a greater fortune than any individual had ever possessed. As fief or mortgage, he held the following castles : Stockholm, Nyköping, Calmar, Wiborg, Raseborg, Tavastehus, Korsholm, Örester., Oppensten, and Rumlaborg, together with the lands and provinces belonging to them. Besides this, he possessed great estates throughout the kingdom, some of which were inherited, others acquired ; and an idea may be formed of his immense riches in moveables, when it is told that he willed away one hundred and fifteen thousand marks of silver besides his ready money. He appointed ten of the chief Lords in the kingdom as executors and trustees, among whom two Bishops, the Riksmarshal Erik Kjellsson Wase, Algot Månson Sture, and Tord Bonde, who immediately took his fortresses and estates into their hands.

Bo Jonsson being dead, Albrecht thought himself rid of a strong opponent, and a great hindrance in his undertakings. He therefore proposed that every third hemman* of the free lands of both clergy and nobles, should be made over to the crown, and began by force to execute his intention ; but he by this means roused the clergy and nobles against him, who had not suffered much previously. Some abandoned the country ; others, those particularly who administered Bo Jonsson's property, defended themselves by arms at their fortified houses against the King's aggressions ; and such was the insecurity, that people scarcely ventured to go

* Hemman, a measure of land.

beyond their own doors. At last they began to look after foreign assistance, and turned their choice on Margaret, who now ruled over both Denmark and Norway. Algot Manson made over Öresten and Oppensten in West Gothland to her, and immediately after she was elected Queen by Bo Jonsson's executors; on which she gave her kingly word, that "she would govern the kingdom according to its laws, let all retain their privileges and help the Lords against Albrecht," with other very favourable articles.

This war wearing a threatening appearance, Albrecht called together from Germany a great army which could boast of many Princes, Dukes, and Counts, and shone in all manner of pomp and magnificence. The Germans boasted, and promised each to kill three Swedes wherever they should meet them; and Albrecht counted on a certain victory. He made a vow, not to use a hat till he had driven out Margaret, and sent her a whetstone several yards long on which he counselled her to sharpen her scissars and needles instead of using a sceptre; and spoke of her sometimes by the contemptuous name of King Breachless; sometimes called her the Monk-maid, because she was accused of having the Abbot of Sorö for her lover. Margaret, wiser than he, showed no arrogance; but drew herself back, setting Erik Wasa at the head of her troops which included many Danes. This Erik was highly irritated against Albrecht, on account of his having protected a German knight named Bernhard the Long, who had carried off Erik's daughter, Elizabeth, out of the convent of Risberga, in which she was a nun. The armies met at Nyckelängen near Falköping, and Erik Wasa placed them so that they had a morass in front, and a hill on one side. Several of the

old men warned Albrecht against attacking the Swedes in this position; but Gerard Snakenborg and some other young men easily persuaded the King whom they pretended to believe invincible. Albrecht believed them, dubbed Gerard a knight, gave the signal of attack, and descended into the valley to cross the morass which divided them from the Swedes. But the greater part of the Germans got presently entangled with their horses in the swamp, and but few got over; who, after a short struggle, were overpowered by the Swedes. These hastened on to attack the rest of the enemy, now in disorder. Gerard Snakenborg, the newly dubbed knight, was the first to fly, and Albrecht, running wildly up and down, meeting one of the old men who had warned him in the morning against fighting, exclaimed: "O grauer, grauer! Hätte ich dir gefolget!" "Old man, old man! Had I but heeded thee!" But he too late perceived his error, for Erik Wasa had won a complete victory; and King Albrecht, his son, Prince Erik, and many Swedish and German nobles were taken prisoners.

Albrecht and the rest were carried to Lödöse, where Margaret was ready to meet them. Seeing herself now the strongest, she in her turn made all manner of jest of the fettered and defenceless King. Amongst many other things of the kind, she caused a hat with nineteen yards of cloth hanging from it to be set on his head, as the punishment of his boastful vow, with many other practical jokes. Finally he and his son were conveyed to the castle of Lindholm in Skåne, where they were shut up in strict confinement.

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CHAPTER V.

OF THE HAT-BROTHERS, AND THE KÄPPLINGE MURDER.

IN Germany as in Sweden, the nobles lived in their fortified castles, fearing and obeying none, neither the Kings nor the laws. When they required money or anything else, they rode out with their armed followers, and cared not whom they attacked, so that they could but carry off booty. They therefore particularly liked lying in wait for merchants with their trains; and partly by force, partly by unjust extortions, making themselves masters of their goods and money; which style of robbing was more practised in Germany than elsewhere. For these reasons many of the commercial towns there entered into an agreement together to protect by their mutual aid, their mutual commerce. This was called the Hanseatic League, and was first entered into by Hamburgh and Lübeck; but other cities were gradually admitted into it, so that at last it included almost all the ports of the Baltic. The Hanseatic League had their factories and warehouses everywhere, thus mastered the commerce, and attained such riches, that they often carried on long and severe wars with the northern Princes.

To trade with these Hanseatic towns, many Germans had come to establish themselves in the commercial ports of Sweden, such as Stockholm, Söderköping and Calmar. The favour which Albrecht showed the Germans brought a still greater influx, till they made at last a considerable portion of the population of these towns; and hatred and envy between them and the native inhabitants often broke out, especially during the war between Margaret and Albrecht, when the

Swedes held for the former, and the Germans for the latter. In Stockholm, where the Castle was garrisoned by Germans, they got the upper hand, and kept it for Albrecht though he was a prisoner. Queen Margaret called them by the nick-name of the Hat-brothers. These feared that the Swedish burghers would give up the town to the Queen and the Senate, which forced them always to wear their armour; and when they met any Swede, they called him traitor and other ill-names. A general disorder being on the point of breaking out, the people were summoned to St. Gertrude's Guild, where the Burgomaster and council instituted a union, the rules of which included that, "no one should speak ill of Princes, Knights, Ladies, Maidens, Towns, or any one;" and Swedes and Germans thereon swore each other a continual friendship and brotherhood, and promised to hold together whatever should befall.

Not long after this, however, the Hat-brothers fell on and imprisoned two Swedish burghers, Peter Ålänning, and Albrecht Carlsson. When Burgomaster Bertil Brun saw this, he complained "of the citizens suffering such violence, and of his not having the power to prevent it." One of the German soldiers who heard his words knocked him down, beat him both blue and bloody, and then dragged him to the Castle where he was thrown into the tower with the other two. The chief instigator of this treacherous deed was Alf Grenerot, one of the Hat-brothers.

When the Swedes heard these proceedings, they armed and collected on the Great Square, as did the Germans likewise; but being in inferior numbers they sought, under pretence of a false reconciliation, to separate the Swedes; who, however, this time did not allow themselves to be deceived, but went up to the Town-

Hall, and asked, "Why the burghers had not been proceeded with according to the laws of the town, instead of being thrown into prison unheard and uncondemned?" The counsellors answered, "That they had nothing against the prisoners, and would cause them to be set at liberty. The following Saturday, thirty Swedes and thirty Germans, met in the Town-Hall, and entered into a new treaty of unity and peace, which was confirmed by solemn vows on both sides to God and the Virgin Mary; and after this there was quiet in the town Saturday and Sunday.

During this leisure, however, Alf Grenerot took advice with the Hat-brethren how they could get the upper-hand of the Swedes. In the evening when vespers had been sung and the city gates shut, the Germans armed secretly and collected in the Guild; their Burgomaster going backwards and forwards between the Guild-room and the Castle, plotting the treachery which was afterwards executed. On the dawn of Monday morning, it happened that an old man passing between the Castle and the Guild heard voices in the latter. In his surprise he went in, and found some of the German Lords there who ordered him to desire the whole Senate immediately to assemble at the Council-house before the people began to fill the streets, for an important message had arrived requiring their immediate consideration. The man did as he was desired; but scarcely had some of the Swedish Senators arrived, ere he saw sixty armed German soldiers march out of the Castle on the Square. The old man then rushed into the Council-house, warning them "to beware of treachery, for the armed men had left the Castle;" but Alf Grenerot said that the old man "behaved most foolishly," and on this sent a

private message to the soldiers to tarry yet awhile. All the Senators being assembled, he sent orders both to the Castle and the Guild-room, which brought sixty soldiers from the former and one thousand well-armed German burghers from the latter on the square. The Swedish Lords seeing these armed men, perceived that their lives were now at stake, and remarked that they had certainly heard of such a thing before, but would not believe it. Alf Grenerot answered that whoever was the King's friend would find this right, and desired the list of the accused to be read forthwith. In it the names of persons were found who had already been four years dead, so old was the list; and it was King Albrecht alone who had prevented the Germans carrying their murderous intentions into execution before.

As soon as they were counted, the soldiers seized them by the belt, and dragged them into the Castle, where many other town's-people were conducted and tortured with wooden saws to force them to confess treason against King Albrecht; but they all maintained their innocence. The following day, Tuesday, three of the Swedish prisoners were burnt. Alf Grenerot went up by night to the Castle, promising the captain half of the prisoners' inheritance if he would immediately permit them to be burnt. On this all the imprisoned gentlemen, sixty in number, were taken out, put into boats, and rowed over to K  ppelinge-holm (the part of Stockholm now called Blasieholm.) Here, bound hand and foot they were thrown into an old wooden house; a priest confessed them, and he solemnly declared that they were innocent of the crime for which they suffered. The Hat-brothers however paid little attention to this, but set the house on fire in which the unhappy fettered

men were burnt alive. This happened on the night between the 11th and 12th of July 1389. The following day such a terrible thunder storm took place with such floods of rain in Stockholm, that every one believed both the town and its inhabitants would be washed away, and not a soul ventured to set a foot out of doors. The people in this thought they saw a sign of the wrath of Heaven on the crime which had been committed.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FETALIE BROTHERS.

KING ALBRECHT's relations and partisans in Germany now equipped a number of privateers which cut off the Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian trading vessels, and plundered the inhabitants of the coast. They were called Fetalie Brothers, as their chief business was to provide Stockholm with provisions and victuals, which were then called Fetalier. They were in company with the Hat-brothers, and so they easily sailed into Lake Mälär by the Norrström, burning and ravaging the banks on either side. Enköping and Westerås were burnt, and when the peasants collected at Tillinge Church, they were mercilessly cut down by the Fetalie-brothers at Bondeberg and Skadeberg, as it is called, in memory of the action. Linköping Malmö, Helsingborg, and finally Bergen were burnt by these freebooters, who cared neither for the anger of the King nor the excommunication of the Bishops. Margaret certainly equipped a fleet, which under the command of Abraham Broderson Tjurhufvud, and Algot Måns-son Sture was to besiege Stockholm in 1393; but John,

Duke of Mecklenburg, appeared with his fleet, and obliged them to raise the siege. The following year, Master Hugo, the leader of the Fetalic-brothers, came with eight ships to revictual Stockholm which again began to suffer hunger, but being kept out by storms until late in the autumn, it happened that his fleet froze fast amid the Skares. Perceiving that now he could hope no peace for the Swedes, he began hewing timber on the neighbouring islands with which he made a fortification round his ships. He caused water to be occasionally poured over this wall, which freezing immediately, it became like an iceberg. As soon as the Swedes heard that the Fetalic-brothers were frozen in, they hastened as they thought to their destruction; but as they could not cross the icy rampart, they built in the greatest haste a machine called a Cat, that is a tower which could be pushed forward on wheels. When Master Hugo saw the Cat was ready to attack, he had the ice before his fortress secretly sawn in the night, and was so favoured by fortune, that after the work was completed, it froze slightly, and a light snow fell in the morning, so that not a trace of the night's business could be seen. The Swedes now mounted the Cat and began to push it onwards, and the Fetalic-brothers stood on their ice rampart beholding their sport. As the Cat advanced towards the ships, the ice cracked beneath it, and the machine with all the men who armed it sunk into the sea and were lost, while the Fetalic-brothers clapped their hands and shouted, "Katz, katz, katz!" to the sinking tower.

After this the Swedes lost all courage to make further attempts to seize Master Hugo; who, after the breaking up of the ice, conveyed his cargoes safely to Stockholm.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CALMAR UNION.

THE sufferings of the three kingdoms may be imagined from this state of things; Margaret had no power to make the Hanseatic towns submit, and they had not sufficient to set King Albrecht free. After many attempts at reconciliations, peace was finally concluded in 1395 between Margaret and Albrecht, on the conditions that he and his son Erik should be set at liberty, but that they on their side should in the course of three years pay the Queen either sixty thousand marks of silver, or give up Stockholm to her and all pretensions to Sweden. Eight of the Hanseatic towns became caution for the fulfilment of these terms, and the castle of Stockholm was meanwhile entrusted to their protection. By these means Albrecht and his son were finally delivered from prison; Albrecht went to Mecklenburg, and his son to Gothland.

When Margaret was thus more at peace, she in 1396 caused Henrik, Duke of Pomerania who was her grand-nephew, to be elected her successor in the three kingdoms; and had his name changed to Erik, which being more familiar in the north, she thought would be more loved by the people. He on his side, when he received the homage of his new subjects, gave his royal word: 1st. That he would maintain every one in his privileges; 2nd. Not to condemn any against the laws; 3rd. To take the Swedes as Senators in Sweden, and give the Castles and provinces to their administration; 4th. Not to diminish the revenues of the crown, or lay on new taxes, except in case of war. It was also settled that many of the estates, which had been lost

during Albrecht's reign, should be restored to the crown ; the fortified castles of the nobility should be razed, and many other conditions which extended the Queen's authority.

The following year, 1397, she assembled a Diet of the three kingdoms in Calmar, and Erik's coronation was celebrated there on the 10th of July. On the twentieth of the same month, or Margaret's day, the celebrated Calmar-Union was concluded and sworn to. It contained : 1st. That the three kingdoms should remain ever united under one sovereign ; 2nd. That a new King should be chosen by the votes of the Senate of the three united kingdoms, and not by the Senate of any kingdom separately ; 3rd. That each kingdom should be governed by its own laws and customs,—and several other similar articles. This league was sworn, and signed, and two copies on parchment were preserved in each kingdom.

The same year Prince Erik Albrechtsson died in Gothland ; and as the term for King Albrecht's payment expired in 1398, he found it difficult to furnish the money, the more especially as his son and successor was dead. He therefore gave the Hanseatic towns a letter, containing orders as he said for the commandant in Stockholm to deliver up the Castle to Margaret ; but when the letter was opened, its contents proved the very reverse. The officer however paid no heed to these treacherous commands, but delivered up the Castle of Stockholm according to agreement, and Sten Sture, Albrecht's faithful adherent, made over the whole of Norrland to Margaret, who thus came into full possession of the three Northern kingdoms.

CHAPTER VIII.

QUEEN MARGARET'S GOVERNMENT.

MARGARET conducted her government with both power and might, and the North in her time enjoyed some repose after its many and sore troubles. She sought to weaken the powerful nobility who had before caused so many disturbances, partly by gradually buying their great possessions from them, partly also by marrying them into families of less consideration. It happened that a noble damsel named Christina Tott was betrothed to Holger Munk, who was also descended from a family of ancient Danish nobility; but Christina was forced by the Queen to marry another man of lower descent. She then gave her new-betrothed a gold ring, in which a bit of copper was set, with this inscription: "Amend thyself, copper nail! thou liest in gold."

To maintain herself against the nobles, the Queen flattered the clergy as much as she could without however giving them too much power. She showed herself particularly friendly towards Wadstena Convent, of which her foster-sister Ingegerd was Abbess. She caused herself to be inscribed among the nuns; and on leaving it, kissed them all on the hand with much humility. However she was not holy in reality, and there was a report everywhere current that she had intimacy with the Abbot of Sorö, and Abraham Brodersson, and bore heirs to both. Her avarice also sometimes enticed her to forget her prudence; for instance, when Archbishop Henry of Upsala died, he left all his money and precious effects to the Cathedral. The whole was packed into a great chest which was

put into a cart, and Dean Andreas seated himself on the load that it might with greater security be conveyed to the Church ; but the Queen's steward, with a body of soldiers fell on the procession. The Dean was thrown off the cart, the chest carried off, neither was it ever restored.

Margaret was much loved and praised by the Danes, but not so much so by the Swedes, who complained of her favouring Denmark at the expense of Sweden, because she hated the Swedes for all the trouble they had caused her husband King Hakan and his father Magnus Smek. She is said to have given Erik the advice, to "feed himself on Sweden, to clothe himself from Norway, and to defend himself with Denmark." When the Swedes complained that she had given over their castles and fortresses into the hands of foreigners expressly contrary to her letters and promises, she is said to have answered contemptuously : "Take care of my letters, I shall take care of your castles." But her stewards, or governors as they are now called, ruled in a cruel and merciless manner over the Swedes, and excited an indignation which was increased by the new taxes the Queen thought fit to lay on. The peasants were particularly enraged at an impost which she laid on every animal ; and as they were counted by their tails, they called it by the contemptuous title of Queen Margaret's Tail-tax. But the fifteen-marks-help fell the heaviest of all ; it was laid on to redeem Gothland, which Albrecht had pawned to the Grand-Master of Livonia ; and though this impost was wholly paid by Sweden, Gothland was afterwards united to Denmark.

CHAPTER IX.

MARGARET'S DEATH.

THE older King Erik became, the more he wished to reign alone, and thus he did much against the Queen's will. On the death of Archbishop Henrik in Upsala, the Chapter chose Dean Andreas as his successor, and sought the Pope's confirmation of their choice; but King Erik would have them to take his Chancellor Johannes Jerichini for their Archbishop, because he engaged to do whatever the King and Queen desired of him. To this the Chapter would not agree, Johannes being a Dane by birth, and known as a very wicked and vicious man. Margaret however at last persuaded this very Bishop Andreas to resign the Archbishopric, and content himself with the Bishopric of Strengnäs instead. For this reason he got the nickname of Andreas Smek, and the Chapter of Strengnäs would not accept him. Much discord and disunion arose about this matter; and when Johannes became Archbishop, he shamed his Sovereign still more by his disgraceful behaviour, so that it was at last requisite to displace him.

Queen Margaret had begun a war with the Dukes in Holstein whom she thought she could easily overcome, but who by their bravery made her an obstinate resistance. During this war King Erik caused Abraham Brodersson, unknown to Margaret, to be taken prisoner, and beheaded without an instant's delay; assigning this man's disorderly life as the reason of this procedure; but the real cause more probably was, that Erik was envious of the great power he enjoyed through the Queen's favour. She much lamented her favourite's death, and caused an altar to be erected to

his memory in the Cathedral of Lund, at which perpetual masses were to be said for his soul.

Meanwhile ill-success attended the war in Holstein. The northern armies suffered a complete defeat at Soldorp in 1410, and the three kingdoms groaned under their losses. At last Queen Margaret went to Flensburg to try to conclude a peace, but all her efforts were vain. As she embarked to leave the place, she was attacked by the plague, and died immediately on board the vessel, A.D. 1412. Albrecht of Mecklenburg died the same year, so these two enemies followed each other to another world.

BOOK IX.

OF ENGELBRECHT AND KING ERIK.

CHAPTER I.

KING ERIK'S GOVERNMENT.

KING ERIK, commonly called Erik the Thirteenth, or Erik of Pomerania, began his reign by various good and useful enactments. Some of Queen Margaret's stewards, who had been very harsh and tyrannical towards the people, were dismissed by him immediately after her death; he made a new statute regarding the holding of Assizes and the administration of justice; appointed certain places for high-way inns, and many other regulations greatly to the advantage of the peasantry which gained him much favour.

But all the good which might have arisen out of this was done away by the unhappy war in Holstein. The King was determined to put down these petty Princes, who nevertheless by their bravery and prudence maintained a powerful resistance. Every spring he arrived with a large army gathered out of his three kingdoms, and always gained great advantages at first by his great superiority of numbers. In one campaign, he took Schleswig; in another made himself master, after a bloody battle, of the Island of Femern, where he put every male to the sword and carried away the women and children; but in the long run he always suffered heavy losses by the obstinate resistance he encoun-

tered. He and his troops wearied out, returned home in autumn, and the Dukes reconquered in winter what they had lost in spring. In this manner the war was carried on during thirty years.

The three kingdoms were exhausted, but especially Sweden and Norway, from which heavy sums were drawn without ever giving a return. New and odious taxes were laid on the peasants and burghers on account of the war, and the clergy themselves were often obliged to pay considerable contributions, though they resisted as long as they could, and appealed to their clerical privileges; but the burden fell heaviest of all on the poorer nobility, thus continually obliged to re-equip their knights, maintain them in a foreign country, and finally often pay heavy ransoms for their relations when they were taken prisoners; for to these particulars the King paid no heed though it was his province to have done so; and in this manner many a nobleman, on account of debt, lost both house and land.

King Erik was besides very unfortunate in his undertakings. The plague ravaged his dominions during the first years of his reign; Stockholm was set on fire by lightning (1419); and as it was very closely built, and consisted for the most part of wooden houses, it burnt down with extraordinary rapidity from ten to twelve o'clock in the forenoon. Many hundred persons who had been unable to break through the crowd were buried under the burning houses; others flew to the havens, seeking to escape in boats; but in their alarm, too many people rushed into these small craft, and more were lost in the water than by the fire. Even on sea, King Erik was pursued by violent storms, and was often shipwrecked; and once, as a further proof of his ill-fortune, when in the disguise of a merchant he

was making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, he was taken prisoner by the Turks who recognized him by a portrait which one of his enemies had made and sent there, and was obliged to ransom himself by a considerable sum.

CHAPTER II.

QUEEN PHILIPPA.

KING ERIK'S wife, Queen Philippa, daughter of Henry IV of England, was a mild and gentle lady; was, moreover, gifted with much sense and a bold heart, when it was tried; for which reasons the King had much aid of her counsels in affairs of moment. Those who came to Court seeking redress of their grievances, always found protection from Philippa, who sought their relief by every means in her power. While King Erik was on his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, he confided the Government to her; and the united kingdoms equally felt the advantage of her administration, as on her journeys through the three countries, she accommodated disputes and quieted many discontents. Amongst other things, in his stress for money, Erik had forced the people to accept coin below the standard which had been peculiarly prejudicial to commerce; but during his absence, Philippa called in this money, and replaced it by coin of the full value.

It happened during the Holstein war, that the Hanseatic towns also declared themselves against Erik. They had some loss in the commencement; but in the spring of 1428, they sailed with a fleet of two hundred and sixty ships, and twelve thousand troops on board for Copenhagen, with the intention of burning the

town and choking the port. A force at that time so uncommon, struck the people with general panic, and Erik himself having supplied the town with ships and troops hid himself in Sorö-cloister till the danger was past; but Philippa remained in Copenhagen with the terrified inhabitants. She encouraged the soldiers and summoned the young men, prompting them to defend themselves valiantly against the enemy. All with joy obeyed the summons of their beloved Queen; and the courage and numbers of the defenders were doubled. The enemy had struck piles for a sort of fortress in the centre of the haven, on which they pointed their artillery at the town and the Danish vessels; but the Danes constructed long and broad floats of thick timber, on which they placed their guns, and were thus able to keep the enemy off both the town and the ships. As they had heard that the Hanseatic allies had brought a good supply of salt with which they intended to pickle the beef they hoped to slaughter in Denmark, some young men took a cow, and leading her out on the floating bridge with many contemptuous phrases, bade them come and pluck a hair out of her tail if they dared. When the enemy saw that they effected nothing against Copenhagen and the ships, they wished to destroy the port; and it was determined that each town should sacrifice a ship to this end; but in sinking them it happened that many sunk so as to occupy but the space of their breadth instead of their length; and the haven was so broad that it required more vessels than they could afford to close it, for which reason this project was abandoned, and the Hanseatic fleet at last obliged to retire without having gained anything by their great preparations and expenses. The Queen sent to invite those who had lent

their voluntary assistance in the defence of the town to the palace, where she entertained them in the most courteous manner, "thanking them for the valour and fidelity they had shown, and promising to speak for their best advantage with all grace and favour to her Sovereign Lord, King Erik."

Encouraged by this good fortune, Queen Philippa wished to see if she could not have better success against the enemies of the country than King Erik had had. She therefore during his absence and unknown to him, prepared and equipped a fleet of seventy-five vessels with fourteen hundred men, who were to avenge at Stralsund the affronts which Denmark had suffered from the Hanseatic towns. With hope and anxiety, Philippa watched the departure of her little fleet, and with the same feelings she patiently awaited its return. Her hope was soon crushed, for but a few boats came back to relate the misfortunes of the rest. The Danes had in the commencement met with some success, and burnt some ships; but as the Hanseatic League got speedy information of the expedition, the town was so well defended that they were soon obliged to retire. One of the Burgomasters of Stralsund then incited the people to arm some large ships in haste, with which they unexpectedly fell on, and nearly destroyed the little vessels of the Danes, so that but few escaped to tell the tale. Great was Philippa's sorrow, not only at the non-success of her enterprise, but because her tender heart reproached her sorely for having been the cause of the misfortune and death of so many. This was, however, not enough for the unhappy Queen. King Erik returned, and learnt the whole history. Envious before at the glory and distinction she had acquired, he had long forgotten the

tenderness he had once felt for her, and therefore seized this opportunity to pour out his wrath against her. Remembering neither her good intentions, nor her perfect innocence in the want of success attending them ; neither reflecting on her high qualities, nor that she was a frail and delicate woman ; last, by forgetting that she was his wife, and in that situation in which a woman requires the utmost tenderness and consideration, he broke out into hard words and reproaches ; he even beat and treated her so ill that a premature labour was the consequence. The deeply injured Queen determined to retire from a world in which all her efforts, all her goodness had brought her but ingratitude and misfortune as her reward ; but once more before resigning her rank and station, she had an opportunity to prove her loving and tender mind, and thus still more to increase the regrets of her subjects and endear her name to posterity.

King Erik this year, 1426, had taken from Sweden with him a large fleet, well-manned and provisioned. The fleet lay the whole summer idle in the Sound ; and when the provisions were consumed, the people asked the King either for their dismissal or new supplies ; but received neither. Some then deserted ; others more faithful remained at their posts, and were at last obliged to part with both clothes and arms to buy food. At Michaelmas they were at last discharged by the King, but scarcely had made ready to sail when they were overtaken by a terrible storm. The masts were cut down, the ships wrecked, and the greater part lost. Some were thrown on Barsebeck on the Swedish coast ; others on the little Salt Island in the Sound. There the unfortunate crews remained without protection, without food, and without the means of getting away.

To expect assistance from Erik was all in vain ; but as soon as Queen Philippa heard of their distress, she sent them clothes and provisions, and caused those who had been drifted to Saltholm to be conveyed to Skåne. Thence every one sought his way home as well as he could ; but wherever they spoke of their misfortunes and their rescue, they ended with grateful blessings on the kind Queen ; so that love to her was spread from vale to vale, and village to village, throughout the wide North.

Philippa then retired from the world and shut herself up in Wadstena Convent, where she was received with veneration by the sisters, and followed by the love and regrets of her subjects. She did not, however, long enjoy the peace she sought. Grief at her misfortunes, and the illness which Erik's violence had brought on laid her in a few months in the grave. Erik saw now, but too late, what he had lost ; and to atone for his crime and honour her memory, made rich donations to churches and convents in her honour. But light as he was, this sorrow was not of long duration ; in other loves he soon forgot his faithful wife ; but his own mistakes and increased misfortunes, as well as the hatred of his subjects, ere long showed him that with Queen Philippa fortune had for ever fled from his side.

CHAPTER III.

ENGELBRECHT ENGELBRECHTSSON.

QUEEN MARGARET, as long as she lived, had upheld King Erik's government ; after her death Queen Philippa had done the same ; however, he began latterly to

despise her counsels, and followed those of his favourites instead, especially Henry Königsmark, so that the want of both reason and mercy began by degrees to mark his enterprises. Like Magnus Smek, Albrecht, Margaret, and almost all the sovereigns of that time in Europe, he laboured to put down the powerful nobility and priests, who despised the crown and oppressed the peasants; but Erik's resistance wanted both justice, wisdom, and strength. By treachery and force he wished to subdue the strong, not to ease the sufferings of the weak, but to become himself sole ruler over all. He commenced and continued his undertakings against them with imprudence and inability, so that they generally ended by further loss of power on his part. The clergy were against him because in defiance of their privileges, he sought to force Bishops upon them of his own election; but as he always chose vicious and despicable men to the office, he lost his cause with the Pope, and his prelates were degraded. The nobility complained of the fortresses being trusted to strangers, and not to them; but the discontent of the peasants was both greatest and most reasonable. The heavy imposts which they before paid in provisions, day's-labour, &c. they were now to make good in money according to the value which the King pleased to impose. As this value was high, and money scarce, many were ruined and their farms became deserts. That the royal taxes might not however suffer, it was proposed that every district should now collectively pay as much as before the population had decreased. By these inventions of Henry Königsmark, the whole land was reduced to misery; and what still more increased the poverty and discontent was the violent and unjust manner in which these taxes were collected. The

stewards were at first but little liked because they were foreigners ; but the harshness, injustice, and cruelty with which they treated the people, brought on them their general detestation. Driven by avarice, they often laid heavy and unlawful imposts on the peasants ; and when they could not pay, took their land and distrained for a mark what was worth three. On the way to Church, or to the Ting, and even at home in their own houses they seized the peasants expressly contrary to Birger Jarl's Laws for Peace, constrained them by torture to give up whatever they desired, even to their wives and daughters. The unfortunate people, in their distress, addressed themselves to the King, imploring him, "for God's sake, to order things that they should enjoy more justice;" but Erik who was in continual want of money, and therefore could not do without the exactions of his stewards, listened not to their complaints. They went from him often unheard, always unassisted.

Not one amongst the stewards had, however, been more cruel than Jösse Eriksson. He lived in Westerås Castle, and his jurisdiction extended over Westmanland and Dalarna.* With unheard-of injustice, he robbed the peasants of their goods ; and when horses and oxen were in this way confiscated, he harnessed them to the plough, and their wives, even those that were with child, to the hay-carts. Helpless women were carried off, and forced to satisfy his shameless appetites ; and many an honest man whose only crime was his riches, he caused to be falsely accused and judged that he might afterwards come into possession

* 'The Vallies,' but we shall always mention it by the name which has gained this province and its inhabitants so much renown in Swedish History.

of his property. When the peasants came to him to complain, he cut off their ears, whipped them, or let them be hung up in smoke till they were suffocated.

Dalarna was in the remotest times a land but little visited, surrounded and occupied by lofty mountains, and watered by the large and rapid Dalelf. Here lived the *Dalmen*, or *Dalkarls*, divided from the other provinces. They were strong and muscular, for continual strife with a niggard and inflexible climate had hardened them; laborious and frugal, as their poor soil required; simple and uncorrupted in their morals, for foreign men and foreign customs seldom reached their distant corner. They deeply hated all injustice and tyranny, and that from strangers so much the more, as they were for the most part peasants on their own property, and had never suffered anything from native Lords. Accustomed to fidelity and obedience to authority, they long endured Jösse Eriksson's cruelty; they sought justice from the King, but Jösse wrote to his protectors at Court, who persuaded Erik that the complaints of the peasants were groundless and rebellious. They were therefore turned back undressed, and the exactions of their tax-gatherers were sure to increase after similar journeys. Then a universal and violent murmur was heard through the land. The peasants collected in their vallies, spoke of their own sufferings, the cruelty of the steward, the injustice of the King. They looked with rage on the steward's riders as they scoured the country; they fretted to think that they, themselves so numerous and so strong, should suffer violence from a handful of hired soldiers. All was ready for rising; a leader alone was wanting.

At this time lived Engelbrecht Engelbrechtsson by the copper mines of Fahlun. He was descended of a

not very high, but at the same time a noble family. Though short of figure, he bore a dauntless courage in his breast, and was in addition eloquent, brave, and exercised in all the arts and science of those days, as he had in his youth lived at the Courts of some of the chief nobility. He pitied the wrongs which the Dalmen suffered, and promised to go to the King and try to get justice for them, and deliverance from Jösse Eriksson's oppressions. He accordingly set out for Copenhagen, where the King at first would give no ears to his complaints, and tried to get rid of him as he had done with others; but Engelbrecht offered with his life to stand to the truth of his asseveration. He begged "the King to keep him prisoner, and call Jösse and witnesses from Dalarna; if before whom Engelbrecht should be unable to prove his words, he was ready to take the rope on his neck." "Thou art bold in thy words," answered the King; "let the Senate examine your dispute: such is our will." Engelbrecht then hastened back to Sweden carrying the King's letters about the matter to the Council. They rode to Dalarna and held an investigation, when Engelbrecht's words were found to be true, and the misery yet greater than he had represented. The Council wrote a letter including all particulars to the King, with which Engelbrecht speeded to Copenhagen; but when he presented himself before Erik with it, the King grew wrath and said violently: "Thou complainest ever! Go thy way, and come never again before my eyes." Then Engelbrecht turned from the King, and went out saying in a muttered tone to himself: "Yet once again shall I return."

CHAPTER IV.

RISING OF THE DALMEN.

WHEN Engelbrecht brought this answer home to the peasants, they assented with one accord and determined sooner to suffer death than to endure such oppression longer. They chose Engelbrecht for their Captain, and marched to Westras in the autumn of 1433 with the intention of expelling Jösse; but the Council met them there, and by promises of getting justice for them from the King persuaded them to return home again; however, the Dalmen made a solemn vow that they would never more pay taxes to Jösse Eriksson. The King notwithstanding did not choose to follow the advice of the Council; Jösse was permitted to remain in Westeras, and again sent out his men to gather the peasant-contributions. These then assembled anew in the spring of 1434, and marched under Engelbrecht to Westeras. There they were again met by the Senators who degraded Jösse from his office, and dismissing him prevailed on the peasants to return home a second time; but Jösse fled to Denmark, and the Dalmen soon heard that the King, far from awarding punishment for his cruelty towards them, irritated by his representations, threatened them with a yet harder task-master.

So long and so often injured, they were now exasperated, and collecting again under Engelbrecht, marched this time, not with the mere intention of getting rid of Jösse Eriksson, but of driving away all foreign Governors, destroying their castles, and delivering the country from foreign rule. Only one such robbers' nest was to be found in Skåne, viz. the Castle

of Borganäs, built on a peninsular in the Dal river, not far from Gråde Ferry. The Steward John Wale fled in alarm to Köpingshus, and Borganäs was soon taken and burnt to the ground. On this the troops marched on to Köping; John Wale again escaped to Stegeborg, and Köping Castle was destroyed. After this Engelbrecht summoned the Westmanlanders to meet him, and inquired if they would assist him in delivering the country. To this they agreed, and marched with him to Westerås, where the castle was soon made over to Engelbrecht. He had before by a public letter invited the nobles to assist him, threatening them otherwise with the loss of life and fortune; and was there joined by many of their number, among others the Senator Nils Gustafsson Puke to whom Engelbrecht confided the command of the Castle. Thence he marched to Upsala, where the Uplanders summoned to meet him there, promised to follow him, and where he, with the consent of the nobles who were with him, reduced a third part of the taxes they were then paying. As Engelbrecht could not himself cross to Finland at the time, he wrote to Sir Erik Puke, son of the above-mentioned Nils Gustafsson, who had the command of Korsholm Castle, begging him to assist in delivering the country. On this the insurrection spread in that quarter. Kastelholm in Åland, Styresholm and Faxeholm, in Norrland, were taken and destroyed by Erik Puke's officers. When the people of Rekarne heard of the success of the Dalmen, they advanced towards Grissholm where their steward Hartwig r'lög resided. He dared not bide the attack of the irritated peasantry, but loading some boats with his moveables, set the Castle on fire and sailed for Stockholm.

Engelbrecht had meanwhile reached it to besiege the

Castle, the Danish Commandant of which, Hans Kröpel, was a very just, sensible and mild man, and much loved by the people. With him Engelbrecht concluded a truce till autumn, as he had no hopes of then being able to take the well-fortified Castle, and nothing but compulsion would make Hans Kröpel give up his master's trust. After this Engelbrecht proceeded to Örebro where the Commandant made terms for six weeks, as did the Commandant of the newly-erected fortress of Nyköping. The turn came next to Ringstaholm below Norrköping. The Commandant, Henrick Styke, thought the Castle impregnable from its situation on an island, and therefore defied Engelbrecht who began the siege; but as it was going on, he having heard that the Bishops and Senators were assembled at Wadstena, rode hastily in that direction with one thousand chosen men, presented himself before them and represented to them, "how that every King, since the death of Magnus Ladulås, had cared but little for the weal of the country and people. They had been Lords for their own advantage, and not for that of the country which they had ruined by unjust taxes, and filled with foreigners, particularly King Erik; and now he, Engelbrecht, had determined to rid the kingdom of this plague, and prayed the Lords to lend him their assistance in doing so." These answered: "That they could by no means break the faith they had sworn the King, and that therefore they could not assist Engelbrecht."

He then represented to them that their fidelity depended upon that of the King who had broken it in such manifold ways, that they could with good conscience forsake him. But the Senate still refusing, Engelbrecht, after several renewed trials to gain them

by persuasion, finding them immoveable, struck on another chord. He solemnly assured them that they should either renounce all faith and loyalty to the King, or it should cost them their life and property. On this he seized Knut Bosson Nattoch Dag, Bishop of Linköping, by the collar to deliver him over to his soldiers, intending to do the same with the others; but they then entreated him to spare them for they feared the rage of the peasants. Engelbrecht then dictated a letter in which the Lords renounced all obedience and fealty to the King. "1°. Because he had appointed ignorant dunces as Bishops, who cared neither for God, the Pope or the Church; 2°. Because he had appointed and preferred wicked and evil men to command, and never punished his servants however tyrannical they might have been; 3°. Because he had wanted to rob the country of its right of election, and force his kinsman Duke Bugislaf upon them."

This letter was signed by them all. Engelbrecht sent it by one of his servants to the King, and returned to his work. Ringstaholm fell, and John Wale was driven out of Stegeborg as he had been from Borganäs and Köping before. All East Gothland went over to the insurgents; and as their army had grown to a great size, Engelbrecht divided it into different bodies, which under separate leaders were to attack the Castles. He succeeded so well that by the end of October, the whole country, with the exception of some few strongholds, was cleared of its enemies. Engelbrecht who with his peasants had by this time proceeded as far as Skåne, met there an army of the inhabitants collected against him, with whom he concluded a long truce. He then dismissed his troops; and it is no small honour for him that he had held them in such excellent order,

that though they consisted of more than one hundred thousand exasperated peasants unaccustomed to authority, no one could complain of their having committed the least violence anywhere, except having taken some provisions from a couple of nobles who were considered to be inclined to the Danes. To distinguish the latter from the Swedes, they ordered them to pronounce the words "Hvit Häst i Korngulf," which words it was impossible for the Danes to pronounce in the Swedish manner, though both languages were at that time very like.

CHAPTER V.

KING ERIK'S TREACHERY.

KING ERIK meanwhile prepared to come to Stockholm before the expiration of the truce concluded between Engelbrecht and Hans Kröpelin. He therefore sailed with a large fleet and powerful army, composed of both Danes and Germans from Copenhagen, intending to punish the Swedes; but at Bornholm he lost several vessels with their crews, on which he went on shore seeking more provision in Calmar Straits. It is said, that when he by force helped himself to some which belonged to the Convent in Wadstena, the people fancied when that same vessel soon after with its plundered property was wrecked at Skägganäs Point, it was a punishment from St. Brigitta herself. The King, who escaped with difficulty, got on board another vessel; and finally after so many impediments reached Stockholm.

As soon as Engelbrecht heard of Erik's arrival, he again summoned the people, and inclosed the town. The commandants of Almarestäk and Östhammar

burnt their Castles, and sailed with their goods and people to Stockholm, where, and on the neighbouring islands, they fortified themselves, so that there was the appearance of but small friendship between the King and his subjects. Nothing serious however took place; Erik feared the superior numbers of the Swedes, and many of the nobles who were now found in Engelbrecht's army were jealous of his power, and feared that of the peasantry. A truce therefore was concluded for nearly a year, during which time a new meeting was to be held in Stockholm, when their differences were to be decided by a jury consisting of four lords of each country; meanwhile the King's stewards were to remain quiet in their Castles, and during that time to gather no taxes from the people. After this the King returned to Denmark, and in Arboga, Engelbrecht was chosen for the Administrator of the kingdom during the truce.

The appointed meeting took place at last in Stockholm on the 8th of September, when a long list of heavy complaints was read to the King of all the injustice the people, great and small, had suffered during his reign. Erik however was not to be persuaded to punish his unjust servants, but sought continual excuses, for he wanted to annihilate the freedom of the three countries, and afterwards leave them as an absolute monarchy, like one large estate to his family in inheritance and possession. This being the case, it was no wonder, if the peace concluded here was in every respect unstable and not to be depended on, and many heads of complaint were referred to a new meeting. The chief which were settled were, "that the King might in Stockholm, Nyköping and Calmar, alone appoint commandants of his own choice. The rest

were to be Swedes, and chosen by the Senate. The former enmity was to be forgotten and forgiven, and Engelbrecht appointed to the command of Örebro Castle. Further a great Chancellor of Justice (Riksdrots) and a Riksmarshal were to be named to govern the kingdom during the King's absence; these two posts having remained unoccupied since the death of Queen Margaret." Christer Nilsson Wase was appointed to the former, Carl Knutsson Bonde to the latter situation; but they were neither of them told what belonged to their office to do, or what assistance they should have in it; and when Carl Knutsson consulted the King on the subject, he was answered in a passion: "Take care only that thou stretchest not thy feet further than thy covering reaches," and further information he did not receive.

As soon as the King had got the Castles back again, according to the articles of the treaty, he began directly, contrary to his promises, to place foreign stewards in them. The Swedish Senators begged the Danish Senators to represent the case to the King, but in vain. They then went themselves to carry their complaints; but he answered them harshly: "That he would by no means be their tool;" adding that "had they not lent their assistance, Engelbrecht could never have done him so much injury;" thus seeking to tear up the former grievances which were to have been forgotten according to the agreement. After this he removed Hans Kröpelin, who was loved and respected by all, from the command of the Castle of Stockholm, and replaced him by another Danish lord named Erik Nilsson Rönnow, and a strong garrison. He then sailed back to Denmark, but appointed some other stewards on the way. At Stegeholm, for instance, he left his porter Olof Finne,

and at Stegeborg Johan Flemming who was a pirate, a thief and dishonoured, and of whom it is related that he plundered Churches, and maltreated women whom he afterwards hung up in smoke till they were suffocated. While the King entrusted the fortresses to such men as these, he permitted his people to plunder and plague the peasants who inhabited the little islands all along the Swedish coast. At last his usual followers, some violent storms came on and destroyed part of his fleet, so that he got back with difficulty to Denmark again. Thus King Erik parted this time from Sweden.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SECOND INSURRECTION.

THE plundered peasants crowded to Engelbrecht in Örebro, relating to him the King's passage and their own distress, for they felt they had only him to whom they could look for help and protection. A Diet was immediately summoned in Arboga on the 20th of January 1439, when they wrote to the King, complaining "that he had broke his oath by giving away the Castles, and bestowing them rather on ruffians than on good knights; and that he wanted to force Duke Bugislaaf upon them, for whom he had desired the stewards to hold their Castles in readiness. They therefore begged the King for the sake of God's holy and cruel death to meet them before Lent in Stockholm, and do them justice, when they would yet count him as their King; but should he not agree, he need never more expect faith and obedience from them." During this meeting, a secret message reached

Engelbrecht from the citizens of Stockholm, asking his help as they now had reason to dread the same treachery and murder from the Danes as they had suffered under King Albrecht from the Germans. On Engelbrecht's representation, the whole assembly rode straight to Stockholm; but the Danes perceiving at a distance their great numbers, drew up the drawbridge and would not admit them. Engelbrecht, Karl Knutsson and two other Lords then rode forward to the gates, holding up a hat on a long pole as a sign of peace. Two German Burgomasters came out, of whom Karl Knutsson asked, "Why the gates were shut to them when others were permitted to pass out and in?" These Burgomasters now began negotiating between the Lords and the Governor of the Castle, and went twice into the town and back again, while Engelbrecht and his friends were waiting without in a bitter frost and snow storm. But when the Burgomasters came out the third time bearing the Commandant's answer, that it was the King's order they should not be admitted, the hat was knocked off the pole, and Karl Knutsson collared the one Burgomaster and Engelbrecht the other. When the Danes saw this, they shut the gate definitively and hastened up to the tower, whence they poured their shot on the Swedes. The citizens seeing this, and fearing to be shut up from all assistance and left in the power of the enemy, made a violent rush on the gate without heeding the shot of the Danes, and began breaking it down that they might admit the Swedes. Those again who heard the battle raging within, pressed on the gate from without, breaking, hewing and throwing great stones till it gave way at last, and the Swedes rushed in. The Danes then hastened from the tower to the citadel carrying

with them all the cattle and provisions they could lay hands on. The Swedish Lords crowded to take possession of the walls and its towers, while Karl Knutsson set up his banner on the corn-market, causing proclamation at the same time to be made, that "whoever adhered to the national cause should hasten to that spot; and that none were to venture to plunder the town or its inhabitants." After this he presented himself on the balcony of the old Town-house, from which the Burgomasters and other authorities used to address the people, and asked the citizens, "if they intended faithfully to hold by the kingdom and the Swedes;" to which he received a general assent, and engaged afterwards to besiege the Danes in the citadel; but so much was Sir Hans Kröpelin, though a Dane by birth, beloved by the Swedes for his gentleness and justice, that hearing he had during the first uproar sought refuge in the convent of Grey Brothers at Riddarholm, they sent him a message informing him, "that he had nothing to fear from them, as no injury was intended to him."

While the Danes who were shut up in their Castle were attempting to fire the town, and had burnt down Kröpelin's house in their efforts, the citadel was surrounded by the troops of Karl Knutsson and Erik Puke, who were to maintain their blockade while Engelbrecht marched through the country to recover the fortresses. The night after these arrangements had been effected, Karl Knutsson caused his men to dig a ditch on his side of the Castle, and throw up a rampart, behind which they could stand sheltered from the shot of the enemy. These tried a sally, but were received with such firmness that they were obliged to hasten back within the walls, and dared not again venture an attack. The Riksmarshal had much as-

sistance from the servants, all stout and hearty men, whom the Archbishop, who was highly enraged against the King, had sent him. Erik Puke on his side tried to throw up a similar rampart; but the citizens went slowly to work. It therefore happened, that when the Swedes on Candlemas-Eve were sitting in their festival dresses at table, and entertaining themselves to the best of their ability, the Danes seized the opportunity of breaking out of the fortress, crossing Erik Puke's poor defences, and rushing some into the houses where they murdered the inhabitants, others to the slaughter-houses which having set on fire, they again drew back into the Castle. They had chosen their time during a very severe storm, when the wind was blowing on the town, and there was great danger that the fire would seize the other houses, and thus that all Stockholm would be consumed, the more so, as by their shot and every other means in their power, they sought to prevent the Swedes from extinguishing the flames. Luckily for the town, the wind suddenly changed which counteracted the hopes of the enemy; but this danger terrified the people so much, that after this time Erik Puke's ramparts were both firmer built and better guarded.

At the news of this misfortune, Engelbrecht hastened back from Nyköping to Stockholm, and the choice of an Administrator was immediately taken into consideration, that they might have a guide in the troubles which now threatened. Thirty voters were then chosen, consisting of Bishops and Nobles, whose votes fell thus: Karl Knutsson had twenty-five voices; Engelbrecht, three; and Erik Puke, two; by which means the Lords betrayed the envy and fear they bore towards Engelbrecht and the people; for though Karl Knutsson was a

rich, nobly descended, active, eloquent, brave, and handsome man, he was only twenty years old, and his services could in no wise be compared with those which Engelbrecht had rendered the kingdom. Erik Puke was also highly indignant at the choice; neither did Engelbrecht himself conceal his displeasure. Both vowed in wrath that "it should go otherwise," and the peasants and burghers promised their faithful assistance. The Lords then in alarm made a reconciliation; on the condition that Karl Knutsson should have the highest authority in Stockholm, and Engelbrecht with the army.

After this arrangement, Engelbrecht proceeded to regain the Castles; and this time, as on the former occasion, his success was speedy; for within three months the greater number of them were taken, and the remaining few blockaded. He conducted the war not only with much order and discipline, but also with great despatch and discretion; where he saw he could not gain a thing by force, he did not consider money, but used it freely to induce the commandants to surrender their fortresses, thus sparing both time and lives. He was likewise very fortunate in his undertakings, and got possession of Grimshus by surprise. When he came to Halmstad, he requested an interview with Tyke Hjort, a Dane, and Burgomaster of the town. Engelbrecht required the fortress to be surrendered; but he boldly answered that "as long as he stood on his feet, that should never happen." On this they parted. But Tyke Hjort had hardly gone a few steps before he fell and broke his leg, and was carried by his servants into the Castle; being now unable to stand on his feet, which he took as a proof that "God had pleased to assist the Swedes," he exhorted the citizens

to surrender. Three days after Tyke died of this injury, and the townspeople were so disheartened by his misfortune, that they soon surrendered to Engelbrecht, who by these means got possession of the strongest of all the fortresses.

King Erik had no power to offer any resistance. Thinking of nothing but the elevation of his family, he tried by every means to get the Danes to elect Duke Bugislaf as his successor or co-regent; but without success. Erik, wearied of his restless reign, quietly made his escape from the kingdom and the war, and returned to Pomerania; but some Danish Senators followed him, and succeeded in persuading him to return with them again.

CHAPTER VII.

ENGELBRECHT'S DEATH.

THE last Castle which Engelbrecht besieged during his journey through the southern part of Sweden was that of Axewalla in West Gothland; but he there fell so ill that it was with difficulty he could be transported to his own Castle of Örebro. Sir Bengt Stenson Natt och Dag of Göksholm, who had had a dispute with Engelbrecht, now demanded a safe conduct to Örebro, there to arrange their difficulties. This Engelbrecht granted; and it was then agreed between them that the following Easter their affairs should be decided by the Senate, each meanwhile promising that neither himself, his children, or any belonging to his house, should in any way injure the other. Engelbrecht then led Sir Bengt as his guest into the Castle where he was hospitably entertained, and they parted on the best terms.

Engelbrecht had meanwhile received instructions to join the Senate in Stockholm as they had an important point to discuss. Being still very weak after his illness, and unable to ride, yet anxious to obey the call, he determined to go by sea, although he was so reduced that it was requisite to lift him off and on the horse which carried him from Örebro Castle to the banks of the Hjelmars. Here two boats were lying waiting, into which he, his wife, children, and some servants entered, intending to pursue their way to Stockholm.

The first six miles beyond Örebro, the Hjelmars is but a narrow and insignificant piece of water, consisting of two small arms, the last of which is closed by the Björksund. This sound is caused by a great peninsula on which Göksholm lies, and beyond this sound the Hjelmars expands into a large and considerable lake called Storfjärden. It was already late on the evening of the 3rd of May 1436, when Engelbrecht came to Björksund, and as he did not choose to cross the Storfjärden in the dark, he determined to pass the night on a little island to the right of the Straits. His men warned him of his former enemy, Bengt Svenson of Göksholm, who was in the neighbourhood; but he depended fully on the reconciliation they had so lately made at Örebro. They therefore went on shore, struck a tent, and lighted a little fire to warm themselves. They soon saw a fully-armed boat coming from Göksholm with Sir Måns, the before mentioned Bengt Svenson's son, in it. Then Engelbrecht said: "Now you will see that Sir Bengt is well-inclined to me, and sends to invite me to Göksholm; but I cannot go on account of my great sickness." He then sent his servants to show them a good landing place; but as soon as the boat approached the strand, Måns Bengtsson

leapt out with an axe in his hand, and hurrying to where Engelbrecht was standing leaning on his stick, asked him in an angry voice, "Shall we never get peace for you, in Sweden!" Engelbrecht sick and weak as he was, replied with difficulty: "Thy father and I have made friends; I hope he has told thee of it." But Mäns Bengtsson would listen to nothing, and gave Engelbrecht a blow with his axe. He held up his crutch as a defence, but the blow fell on the hand itself, and cut off three fingers. Then Engelbrecht turned to go away; but Mäns Bengtsson gave him the second blow on the neck, and the third deep in the head, so that Engelbrecht fell dead to the ground. Not content with this, Mäns Bengtsson had the dead body shot through with many arrows; and not till he had thus wrecked his vengeance did he return to Göksholm, carrying with him Engelbrecht's wife and children prisoners.

To gain the utmost advantage of this assassination, Mäns Bengtsson intended to have possessed himself of Örebro Castle in the following manner. He took one of Engelbrecht's servants, Albrecht Peccatel, and a body of armed men with him, and riding with all speed to Örebro arrived while it was still night. They went up to the Castle, and Albrecht Peccatel was made to cry for instant admission, on pretence of a very important errand from Engelbrecht; but the Captain of the guard answered, that Albrecht might remain there till dawn, for the Castle gates should not be opened that night. As there was no persuading him to alter his mind, Mäns Bengtsson plundered the town of all that Engelbrecht and his men possessed in it, and then made the best of their way back to Göksholm; but as they feared the vengeance of the people, Mäns Bengtsson and his

father made their escape to Ringstaholm, after having first set Engelbrecht's widow and children free.

The news of this murder soon spread through the neighbourhood, and the peasantry crowded in madness to Göksholm to revenge themselves on the murderer; but he had already escaped, and his servants defended his lofty tower, so that the peasants seeing they could do nothing against it, burnt and destroyed everything in the neighbourhood. Meanwhile Engelbrecht's body lay yet on the island. The peasants hastened thither, and with many hot tears took up the mangled corpse of their beloved leader, carried it to Mellösa Church, and buried there with sighs and tears, him who had been their only help and support when they were all oppressed. Afterwards seeking a suitable place for his interment, they removed his body to Örebro where it was put in the vaults of the Cathedral; and so firm was the faith in his innocence and honour, that the monks pretended that miracles were performed at his grave as if he were a saint.

Karl Knutsson, by the death of Engelbrecht, was freed from a dangerous rival in supreme power, and seemed therefore not to disapprove of Mäns Bengtsson's deed, even publishing an ordination throughout the kingdom that none should venture to attack or even to blame him for this matter. But he did not remain unpunished. He soon felt the bitterest remorse for his crime, and in his despair would have killed himself had he not been prevented. As he had suffered himself to be seduced by the Danes to this action, he and his son bore them an immeasurable hatred, never enduring to hear them mentioned. But all his repentance could not serve to obliterate his crime; the people looked on Mäns Bengtsson with inveterate suspi-

cion, and thought in the misfortunes and mishaps which afterwards overtook his family, that they read the vengeance of Heaven for the innocent blood he had shed. It is related that the ghost of Maus Bengtsson's mother, who, through avarice, it is said incited her son to the crime, is at night occasionally heard to sigh and lament in the closed vaults under Göksholm's old towers. The island is called Engelbrecht's Holm to this day; and the old people show the stunted grass burnt by the sun in the sand, saying that no green thing can thrive on the cursed earth which drunk the innocent blood of Engelbrecht Engelbrechtsson.

BOOK X.

KARL KNUTSSON.

CHAPTER I.

OF KARL KNUTSSON.

AFTER Engelbrecht's death, Karl Knutsson was the most mighty man in all the kingdom of Sweden. He was descended of families of the first consideration, his father Riksdrots Knut Bonde, and his mother Margaret Sparre, daughter of the powerful Karl Ulfson of Tofta, being both descendants of the old Jedward Bonde. From his parents he not only inherited high birth and great riches, but had even received what in that day was considered a very careful education, so that he had more learning than the other nobles, and could even speak Latin, which only some bishops, and a very few of the clergy could do. He was of a strong, and very tall figure, and had besides a manly and noble appearance. He was of a gay and friendly character, mild and engaging in his manners, and master of his language in speaking to the people; which advantage was increased by his voice being so powerful that it was heard above the murmur of many hundred men. Thus formed by nature and fortune, he had extraordinary success, and was not more than twenty-seven, when in 1435 he was named Riksmarshal, and the following year Administrator.

But to these great advantages, Karl added the fault of

loving pomp and pleasure too much ; and then his chief ambition was to set the crown on his head, to which he occasionally sacrificed the good of the country and the claims of justice. He partly kept to himself, partly distributed amongst his relations the chief posts in the Government. In Stockholm, he kept a large and brilliant house : whoever pleased was welcome to his table ; and as by his great revenues he both could and did pay his servants better than others, the great mass who seek meat and money hastened to his service, and he thus collected a powerful body of such friends and dependants. The other Lords envied his power in secret : however, they did not dare to betray themselves for they considered him as a defence against Engelbrecht's party and the peasants whose increasing consideration they most feared.

CHAPTER II.

KARL KNUTSSON AND ERIK PUKE.

EVER since the election of an Administrator in 1436, in which the choice had fallen on Karl, Erik Puke had entertained a great aversion to him, which increased on the death of Engelbrecht when he would have desired to have been chief himself. Before that event, Erik Puke and eight of his men had made a solemn vow that they would murder the Marshal whenever they had an opportunity ; and attempted several times, though Karl had always fortunately escaped. Once when the Senate was assembled in the Convent of the Black Brothers in Stockholm, and Erik Puke came also with his confederates intending to accomplish the murder, he addressed the Marshal roughly, saying : " Karl

Knutsson keep your beagles at home, otherwise I will strike them across the nose. They entice my servants from me ;” meaning that Karl’s servants with promise of higher wages inveigled his. The Marshal answered with much moderation, “that if Puke had any complaint against his people to prefer, the men should be made to answer for it before the Council, and that were they found guilty they should never again eat of his bread.” But Erik answered in wrath, “We shall never part in peace, but we and our men must meet on the field, and he who then gets the upper hand shall rule over the other.” Karl Knutsson replied : “That they should by no means depend on their servants, but could settle it between themselves ; and for his part he was ready whenever the matter they had then in hand” (the siege of the Citadel of Stockholm) “was brought to a termination ; but he would not do it before, unless compelled.” Then Puke leapt up, and hurried out with his servants ; but one of these caught him by the skirts at the door, saying, “Think, Sir Erik, of what brought us here !” Erik answered, “The time is not yet come !” to which the servant replied, “As you please, but while you tarry he will strike.” After this, a reconciliation was effected ; but this did not prevent Erik, when he was sent out by Karl on affairs of state, exciting the peasantry everywhere against him whom he painted in the blackest colours.

Some time after Karl having to go from Stockholm to Nyköping, Erik Puke who was in possession of Södertelje intending to fall upon him, wanted to persuade him to travel by the high road to Telje. When Karl excused himself on the plea of his horses being out at grass, Puke offered him both his horses and servants ; but the other excused himself from this com-

pany, and set out with some attendants in a couple of boats across the Mälar to Telje where the boats were carried over into Saltsjö, and he proceeded on his way to Nyköping; all this being done with such despatch, that Erik had no time to arrange his plan before Karl was happily beyond his reach.

But on his return, Erik hoping to make more sure of him, blocked Härstäke Sound; so that he, not being able to get through, would be obliged to take the road by Telje. However Karl received information of this treacherous intention of Puke's, and therefore did not go to Telje; and when he reached Härstäke found it not so impassable but that he not only discovered a way through it for his boats, but a broad open passage by which he rowed on well satisfied to Stockholm.

Failing in this attempt, Puke followed him to the capital, where he and Karl Knutsson mutually visited each other, and showed fair countenances and much friendship; but it happened once that Karl Knutsson at a great feast at Erik Puke's, asking him, "Why he had shut up Härstäke Sound?" Puke, who was drunk by that time, answered boldly: "There is not between this and Calmar any pike for which so many hooks are laid out as I have laid for thee, though I have not succeeded yet." Karl Knutsson pretended to pay no attention to this, and turned off the conversation to other subjects. He seemed not to fear Erik Puke much.

Meanwhile a meeting was held at Calmar in which the Union was renewed, and it was determined that King Erik should come to a meeting in Söderköping, where all complaints should be taken into consideration, and the fleet be put under the command of Swedish men. Erik accordingly left Gothland with a considerable fleet, but scarcely were they well out at sea when a

violent storm came on, and as it was in the middle of the night, the ships dashed against and sunk each other. A great number of them were lost, others were cast, some on the Söderköping Skares, others on Öland, and in the Straits of Calmar. The King himself was driven back to Gothland, where he had hardly landed on the Karl Islands before the ship on board which he had been sunk before his eyes.

The Swedish Lords were meanwhile waiting for him in Söderköping; but when a general rumour spread that he had gone down in the storm, the Marshal summoned the foreign stewards, according to the agreement, to give up the Castles. Having no power of resistance, they resigned them to him, who kept the greater part in his own hands, or bestowed them upon his relatives. Some he also gave to Erik Puke, against the advice of the other Senators, in the hope of propitiating his good will.

Some of the Lords were highly displeased at having had no share in these distributions, particularly one called Broder Svensson who had distinguished himself at sea, and been besides one of Engelbrecht's most devoted partizans. He collected his friends and servants without the town, and having made them a violent speech regarding the injustice and avarice of the Marshal, afterwards rode to Söderköping, where he, in the presence of many, attacked him with heavy complaints and threatening words; but the Marshal had Broder Svensson immediately arrested and beheaded the following day, thus bringing this disturbance to a summary conclusion.

Erik Puke continued his machinations against the Marshal, notwithstanding the assistance he had received from him at the Diet of Söderköping. He once

demanded that they might have an interview with only a few men on either side; but Karl having heard that Erik had posted an ambush of one hundred men on the way, excused himself from this meeting. In spite of this, he imagined he could still gain Erik's good-will, and gave him the whole of Helsingeland as a fief; which did not however prevent him, on a journey in Westmanland, from finding all the peasants excited to fury against him by Erik's representations. Finally when he arrived at Köping, and had already gone to bed, his butler came in and told him that Puke had stirred up the people of Rekarne to rebellion; and that he was with his troops only twelve miles from Köping, where he intended to surprise Karl that night. But Karl thought he had more secure information, and not fearing Erik at all, laid himself quietly to sleep. The following day, on his way to Arboga, he met two heralds, who delivered to him Puke's open letter of enmity, which ran thus :

“ Know this, Karl, that if thou, or any other man wants aught with me, I am to be found in Arboga, and God have mercy upon my soul; but I shall not lie idle at home, for I never know when I may be burnt, roasted, or slain. Know that until the day when it shall be better between us than it now is, where I find thee, or any one belonging to thee, I will act towards him as becomes me towards my worst enemy. God's holy blood knows well that I had thought to leave this undone; and thou shalt further know that the day which was fixed between Bengt Stensson and me I renounce, for I will not hold my enemies so cheap as I hitherto have done. *Scriptum Arbogæ, sub meo sigillo.*”

When the Marshal had read this letter, he got off his horse, fell on his knees, and prayed God to judge be-

tween them, and to revenge him on Puke who so ill-rewarded his benefits. After that, he held counsel with his friends, on which some were sent to Örebro to furnish the Castles with provisions. He rode himself to Westerås, called the burghers together and asked of them supplies wherewith to victual the fortress. This they flatly refused, saying that Puke and the peasants would then burn their town. "That you need not fear," said the Riksmarshal, "for I shall do it myself." On which he ordered his men to arm, and entering the town set fire to every street. The burghers then submitted, the Castle was well-provisioned, and Karl rode the same night to Stockholm, where he made preparations for the expected insurrection. He spoke from the balcony of the Town-house to the citizens and received their promise of assistance. The Archbishop and other nobles also sent him many stout hands, so that in eight days he was ready to march against Puke.

When Erik Puke on his side heard that Karl had escaped from Köping, he took great courage and collected the peasants at Arboga river which was frozen. He then made these simple people believe all manner of untruths regarding Karl, saying that when the peasants came to him he used to bind, beat, and flay them, cut their mouths from ear to ear, tie them to palings, and let them freeze to death; and finally exhorted them "to accompany him to the Mora Stones, and there choose a peasant's son for their King and crown; but as for himself, he would by no means become King," he said. The peasants believed him, and promised obedience. He held the same speeches to the inhabitants of Neke, engaging to make of the Castle a Convent to the memory of Engelbrecht. These willingly followed the friend of their beloved leader, and

promised assistance. He permitted them to plunder one of Karl's farms which was in their town ; and there the peasants enjoyed some merry days, killing, roasting, and eating as much as they were able ; but when Erik summoned the Castle to surrender, they would not listen, and receiving the information that they had just been reinforced and were well victualled, contrary to what he had been led to believe, he told the peasants that he must go to Westera's to protect the country from the Marshal's incursions, but would leave some of his troops behind to head them. They complained bitterly of this abandonment, and implored him to stay ; but he hastened away, and no sooner was he gone than the garrison of Örebro, sallying out, made sad havoc among the peasants, who, forgetting both their wallets and arms, fled to hide themselves in forests and morasses, and found that their entertainment at Karl's expense in the end cost them too dear.

Puke meanwhile had collected and inveigled the Westmanlanders with whom he began to besiege Westera's Castle. He summoned it to surrender ; but the Governor, Bengt Gunnarsson answered he could neither treat nor make peace with the traitor Erik Puke, but he would share the peasants' wallets with them. In the evening, accordingly Bengt made a sally and chased the peasants from their supper, when so great a number was killed that Erik Puke with all his troop was obliged to keep watch before the Castle the whole night, and suffered much from the severe cold, for it was now winter. The following day, 16th December, mass being ended, the garrison made another sally on the unprepared peasantry, when the confusion was worse than before. The Marshal's servants drove hordes of these unfortunates whom they had taken prisoners into the Castle,

and caused several cart-loads of their provision wallets to be also carried there, while they were rushing about in disorder. In this way, the soldiers proceeded for an hour in the town, before Erik Puke got his men collected to whom the peasants joined themselves. When the garrison saw this, they retired into the Castle in good order, and Erik Puke, who perceived that he could win nothing here, immediately proceeded to Dalarna, abandoning the peasants, who hurried every one back to his home complaining and lamenting at having been deceived and inveigled into this enterprise.

The Marshal now arrived with his forces from Stockholm, and passed through Westmanland, Rekarne and Nerke during the winter, summoning the peasants who submitted and were pardoned on paying fines, except four of their chiefs who were executed. But as he received a letter from the Dalmen professing their intention of assisting Erik Puke, he further summoned the Uplanders and East Gothlanders to meet him the twentieth day after Christmas at Westerås; Erik and the Dalmen had encamped at Hälle Forest, a little further northward, and cut a trench round them. Here Karl and Erik at last came to a meeting, and the latter promised to be faithful to the Marshal, and bring the Dalmen to a reconciliation with him on the following day at Haraker Church. On the following day, accordingly, the Marshal, the Archbishop and several others in their company proceeded to Haraker, where they had to sit in snow and storm all day long, and not a peasant was to be seen. Puke arrived in the evening and said, that he had no power with the peasants; he however promised to meet the Marshal on Hofdista meadow near Westerås. But here the Marshal again waited in vain, and was in this way yet

a third time deceived. He was then highly indignant, and being informed that it was but a treacherous arrangement of Puke and the Dalmen who were waiting reinforcements from the Helsingars and Gestrickers, he rode with his whole troop immediately up to Skultuna Church. He reminded the Dalmen of how they had before promised faith and homage; and asked if they now intended to fight against him. They all exclaimed, "no!" submitted and promised that Puke should deceive them no more. The Marshal then granted them pardon, and ordered them to return home; but he himself rode on to Westerås, where he invited Puke to follow promising him safe conduct. Erik's friends warned him, but he said he could fully depend on the word of so great a man, and went; but when at their meeting he spoke angrily and imprudently, and expressed his wrath and bitterness in explicit terms, the Marshal caused him to be seized, and directly contrary to the safe conduct he had granted him, sent him to the High Chancellor Krister Nilsson Wase in Stockholm, who had him beheaded without delay. Such was the end of Erik Puke's ambition; and many wondered that Karl Knutsson had not done this long before, when he had such sufficient reason rather than on this occasion break his plighted word.

CHAPTER III.

DEATH OF JÖSSE ERIKSON.

JÖSSE ERIKSON had got a warrant from the Marshal for his personal safety, forbidding any to dare to charge him with his former cruelties; after which he

established himself in Wadstena. The neighbouring peasants who thought that during Erik's war with Puke they could do what they pleased, broke into the cell, sought for their old enemy, and dragged him down the stairs, his head beating against every step ; after which they bound him on a sledge, and carried him off to Motala Ting. There they gathered in a circle round him, and adjudged him to death on account of all the cruelty he had practised in Dalarna, whereon he was beheaded forthwith. Karl Knutsson, indignant that the peasants should have broken his safe conduct, condemned them to heavy fines for what they had done.

CHAPTER IV.

OF KARL KNUTSSON AND KRISTER NILSSON.

THE Lord Chancellor, Krister Nilsson Wase of Björnö entertained feelings of secret envy at the great power and consideration of the Marshal ; but did not venture to show them openly. One meeting after the other was now held with the Danish deputies of King Erik, partly regarding the renewal of the Union, partly regarding the King's return to Sweden. Though Erik had often broken the promises he had made at these meetings, and conducted himself ill and imprudently, Krister Nilsson desired to have him back in the country again to diminish Karl's authority. Karl on his side wished to have Erik deposed that he might himself be King. Thus they both sought their own advantage, and neither that of the nation. However, outwardly they had the appearance of the warmest friendship ; the Riksdrots who was old, called Karl

his son ; Karl called him father in return, and pretended to listen with reverence to his fatherly counsel, though he knew it to be false. For instance, when the Wermlanders and Dalmen had broken into insurrection, he advised Karl "to treat with them, and not to go to them himself, otherwise they would never endure him again." Krister did this to strengthen the uproar which he was secretly fomenting, in hopes of getting Dalarna and Westeraas as a fief for himself and his son. But the Marshal despatched Arwid Swan with one hundred and twenty men to Wernmland, where he in Jössehärad cut down a number of peasants, and soon brought the country to order. The Dalmen again summoned a meeting with Karl at Enköping, on which occasions the Chancellor always warned his "dear son," against going out to meet the peasants ; but Karl Knutsson still presented himself boldly in their assembly, and none of them had any complaint to prefer against him and his servants, but confessed their crime, promising fines for it now, and obedience in future.

Karl had once intrusted Krister with his seal to place at the end of some letters going abroad ; but Krister used it on a letter appointing Helsingeland to himself, and this without the Marshal's consent. He engaged with several of the Bishops and Senators to deprive Karl of the Government, but found it an undertaking beyond his power, when instead of being deposed, Karl was chosen Administrator to the great discomfiture of the old man, who was now obliged to acknowledge him as his superior. He therefore entered into secret plots to effect the return of King Erik, which coming to Karl's ears, he was determined to put a stop to these annoyances. He allowed Klas Lang, one of his ser-

vants, to choose forty of his ablest-bodied men with whom he rode to Råfwelstad, Krister Nilsson's estate, where he so fully executed his commission that more than a hundred of Krister's attendants were surprised and made prisoners in the hall in the evening, and he himself was dragged out of his bed, thrown half-dressed into a sledge and conveyed away to Westerås, after which he was obliged to leave all his possessions in Sweden, and content himself with Wiborg Castle in Finland.

Thus Karl Knutsson mastered this enemy also; treachery was punished by treachery, and if the conscience of any one were wounded by actions of the kind, the rich were able with large sums to buy the Pope's pardon, and live after obtaining it as they pleased.

CHAPTER V.

OF KARL KNUTSSON AND NILS STENSSON.

NILS STENSSON NATTOCH DAG, uncle of Engelbrecht's murderer Mans Bengtsson, was married to Karl's sister; but notwithstanding this near relationship could not see his great power without bitter envy. With his two brothers Bo and Bengt, he had already taken part in Krister Nilsson's plots, but they had made a show of reconciliation, and given their oath of fealty; scarcely however was the Marshal out of East Gothland before Nils suffered his servants to scour the country, ill-treating Karl's dependants wherever they were to be found, and plundering and robbing the peasants, priests, and churches. Enraged by this conduct, Karl then pursued the offender, drove him to

seek refuge in Stegeborg, where he left Erengisle to conduct the siege, warning him to put no faith in Nils. Notwithstanding this admonition, Nils succeeded, when he began to run short of provisions, in persuading Erengisle to agree to a truce upon pretence of seeking a reconciliation with Karl. He promised with many an oath, and eight of his men gave bail for him, that he would not quit the Castle during the truce; but scarcely had the besiegers withdrawn before he rode with twenty men out of Stegeborg and through Småland, till they found a ship which they forcibly seized, and on which they crossed to King Erik in Gothland, leaving Karl in wrath with his servants who had so suffered themselves to be taken in.

King Erik received Nils Stensson well, thinking by his assistance to regain the kingdom; he gave him two hundred courtiers,* plenty of supplies, money and provisions, appointing him Marshal, and addressing letters to the principal authorities of the kingdom, commanding all to obey Sir Nils Stensson. Thus provided he returned to East Gothland, permitting his men in their passage through the country to burn and ravage everywhere; and carrying besides, to the great indignation of the Swedes, the Danish banner Dannebrog before them. But Karl and his followers soon entered East Gothland, when Nils Stensson escaped to Gothland, and his plundering followers hastened to hide themselves in Stegeborg Castle, which Karl blockaded on every side. He lived himself during this siege on an island which is yet called Karlsholm after

* The followers of any great Lord were at that time called thus. They were to be well-armed riders, well-practised in fighting and fencing, and entirely devoted to, and obedient to their masters' orders.

him. The people in the Castle observing that he often passed between his encampments along a height which was within shot of the Castle, Rodenberg, the gun-master "swore by his life and honour, that if ever he passed that way again, he would cause it to be the last time;" and therefore turned fourteen guns, which were first introduced into Sweden at this time, towards the height, and had them loaded with stones instead of ball, according to the custom of the times. They presently saw Karl advancing, for he was easily recognised by his gigantic height, and majestic walk. Rodenberg fired the first cannon; but it rebounded off its carriage, and the stone passed twenty fathoms over the head of the intended victim; he fired the second, but it burst, and the stone fell as much too short; he fired the third, but with no better success. Rodenberg now would try no more, for he felt himself sick, and said, "It was God's punishment for his evil intentions against the Marshal," who thus fortunately escaped so great a danger; and the siege was continued with such resolution that the besieged were obliged to capitulate. The brothers Nattoch Dag again made submission to Karl, and once more swore him fealty; but he soon heard that Nils was returned from Gothland, and scouring East Gothland with sixty retainers, committing every manner of depredation. Karl again sent out his men, who found these ruffians on a plain between Norr and Söderköping, beat them entirely, and took Nils Bengtsson prisoner. He was carried immediately to Söderköping, where he soon died of a contagious illness; but Karl caused a strict inquiry to be held among his servants, of whom nine were beheaded and impaled.

Måns Greh, the steward of Borkholm Castle on the

island of Öland, immediately on this commenced an insurrection to assist Erik against Karl; but the latter made a speedy descent on the island, forcing him to surrender his Castle, and take the oath of faith and loyalty to himself.

CHAPTER VI.

DEPOSITION OF KING ERIK.

IN this manner every attempt failed to help Erik again to the Swedish crown, and the numerous negotiations which were held for the same purpose were followed by equal failure of success from Erik's want of sense and honesty, however much the faithful and honest Hans Kröpelin laboured for him. He had long before lost all respect in Denmark. It once happened that the powerful and illustrious Olof Tott met the King's mistress, damsel Cecilia, riding in a gay and gallant carriage, or *Karm* as it was then called, and Herr Olof not knowing her, took off his hat and saluted her respectfully as if she had been a lady of quality. His servants began to smile at this; and when Olof Tott learnt whom he had saluted, he overturned her carriage in his wrath, drew damsel Cecilia out of it, and giving her three blows with the side of his sword, told her to carry his compliments to King Erik and say, that "She should part him and Denmark." The want of morals went to such a length that Dorothea, another of the King's mistresses, bore openly in her seal the words: "Dorothea, King Erik's concubine."

At length, when Erik had entirely wearied out the Danes by his obstinacy in insisting against their will in bequeathing the crown to Bugislaaf of Pomerania, he set

off for Gothland, carrying the treasures of the kingdom, and his dear Cecilia with him. He gave as a reason for this departure, that he was to treat with the Swedes; but he never returned. The offended Danes speedily sent after him, refusing him further faith and obedience, and at the same elected his sister's son, Duke Christopher of Bavaria, for their King. When Erik refused to agree to the conditions which the Swedes proposed, they also refused him further fealty (1439). Erik made no particular efforts to regain his kingdoms, but lived a long life of indolence and dishonour on the island of Gothland, supporting himself chiefly by taking and plundering Swedish and Danish ships in the Baltic.

Duke Christopher of Bavaria wrote in 1438 to the Swedish Senate proposing himself as their King; but Karl had at that time influence sufficient to prevent the accomplishment of his wish. He seemed both to himself and others not unworthy of bearing the crown on his own head. By his activity he had quieted all the internal disorders of the kingdom, and freed it from foreign domination. Many wonderful reports were spread about him. The old gun-master Rodenborg in his long and severe illness, it was said, could not die till he had got Karl's forgiveness. A little girl once during sermon imagined that she saw a gold crown on Karl's head, and pointed it out to many; and a man of eighty foretold him that he was certain of one day becoming King.

But on the other hand his enemies were numerous and various. The peasants hated him for having, as they thought, overlooked, if not connived at Engelbrecht's murder. The priests whose interest it was to uphold the Calmar-Union, saw in Karl their only

impediment. The nobles envied his power, and could not endure the thought of his becoming their King and Governor. Many hated the violent, and often treacherous manner in which he made an end of his enemies ; besides those that have been already mentioned, he is said to have poisoned Archbishop Olof with almond milk, because of his adherence to King Erik. Many again were attached to the Calmar-Union for its own sake, imagining the larger a kingdom, the happier its inhabitants must be ; and the Lords desired its maintenance, that they, as the chief men in the country, might govern it during the absence of the Sovereign.

All Karl's efforts failed before these reasons. During two years he succeeded in excluding Christopher and governing the kingdom himself as Administrator, but finally he was obliged to give way before the obstinate desire of the Lords to have Christopher for their King, and Christopher's own management, who by his Ambassadors promised the Swedes, and Karl Knutsson in particular every manner of good. Christopher flattered him in every possible way, and agreed immediately to Karl's request of getting Finland and Öland as a fief, and also that no account might be called for from him of the years in which he had held the reins of Government. On these conditions, and after he had given his royal word, Christopher was named King of Sweden in 1441.

CHAPTER VII.

OF KING CHRISTOPHER.

CHRISTOPHER now came to Stockholm, into which he made a magnificent entry, walking beside Karl

Knutsson. He was handsome, even beautiful in face, but his figure was short and insignificant, and disfigured besides by too much *embonpoint*. The people also who looked on, said among themselves that the Marshal was handsomer than the King, and more fit to bear a crown; which when Christopher heard afterwards, he begged Karl jokingly, "Not to walk so near him, for the people said Karl should be King, and Christopher his servant." He, however, showed him all outward signs of the greatest friendship, and stood as godfather to one of his daughters. But as the Marshal saw clearly that the King in reality did not wish him well, he took his departure for his new command in Åbo. The King then made his Eriksgata, and everywhere listened with the greatest complaisance to any complaint against Karl Knutsson. He summoned him to Stockholm to answer these accusations, and thus broke the promise he had made on his election. Karl, however, presented himself; but only on the King's solemn warrant of security, which he, however, made still more certain by coming accompanied by five hundred well-armed men. However, Christopher contrived, by his cunning, to bring Karl into embarrassment, and he was obliged to give up Åbo, and content himself with Wiborg. Karl hastened back again, fearing some further treachery; but was permitted to remain several years in quiet in a sort of exile in the same Wiborg Castle where he had himself in the days of his power banished his rival, the old Sir Krister Nilsson Wase.

Christopher thought he had now considerably reduced Karl Knutsson's power, whose great consideration he always stood in dread of; but he was unable himself to win the love of his subjects; for with all his wit and gaiety, he was not a wise and just, but a cun-

ning and artful man. To gain money and sow the seeds of discord between the Swedish Lords, he would without their knowledge sell one command to several amongst them at the same time; but the consequence was that he gained the enmity of them all. In the beginning, he wished to patronize and provide for his Bavarians; but when the Danes and Swedes made serious representations regarding this, they were sent back again out of the country. General indignation was excited when the people complained to Christopher of Erik's piracies in Gothland, by the King's answering carelessly "That his uncle surely wanted something for his support when he was settled on such a barren rock as Gothland." At length, however, when Erik's robberies became unbearable, Christopher crossed over there with some armed vessels; but after a private interview which both Kings had together, they came to a mutual understanding, and Christopher sailed away leaving Erik to continue his pillaging as before.

What however made Christopher's reign most odious was the hard seasons which followed each other. Under Karl Knutsson there had always been good years; but under Christopher the harvest failed one year after the other, so that the people were obliged to eat bark bread, and in addition the plague broke out in the country. Notwithstanding this distress, the King used to travel about with a great suite, and the people were obliged every night to collect five cart loads of corn for his horses, while they themselves were eating bark. They therefore nicknamed him Christopher Bark-king, and ascribed as usual the famine to the King's sinfulness, for he lived an evil life, giving an example of gambling, drinking, and every vice, though his young

Queen, but fifteen years old, was the greatest beauty in the North.

In other respects King Christopher was of a gay and good-natured disposition, and showed some sense in his government, though it was often disfigured by artifice and want of faith. The chief efforts of his reign were to shake off the yoke the Hanseatic towns had laid on the North, and to diminish their power; but he died suddenly in the midst of these preparations in Helsingborg on the 6th of January, 1448, leaving no heirs.

All that is more to be noted regarding him is, that in his reign in 1442, the Code called *Medel-lag*, which had been compiled in Magnus Smek's time, was at last accepted as the general law of the kingdom.

CHAPTER VIII.

KARL KNUTSSON BECOMES KING.

WHEN Christopher died, both the brothers Bengt and Nils Oxenstjerna were named Administrators, and this family now rose to great power, as Herr Jöns Oxenstjerna the son of the former was elected Archbishop after Nicholas, who died of sorrow at Christopher's death, and at the distresses which he saw impending over his country. Nevertheless the Oxenstjernas had not enough authority to make any one of themselves King, but wished instead 'to uphold the Union of Calmar in which they were supported by the Wasas. On the other hand, the families of Bonde and Bjelke held with Karl Knutsson, who now hastened over from Finland with eight hundred knights. Rumours of many prophecies and revelations pointing him out as the des-

tined sovereign, flew before him throughout the land. The spring had been uncommonly dry, so that the whole country feared a complete failure of the crops ; but the same day that Karl landed in Stockholm, the 23rd of May, plentiful and refreshing rain fell on the parched earth, and the people who in this recognized his former good fortune, and thought they saw the manifestation of God's peculiar pleasure in him, became the more devoted to his interests. Vain were the attempts of the Oxenstjernas to get one of their own family elected : vain their efforts to delay the election and renew the Union of Calmar. In vain, finally, did Jöns Bengtsson absent himself, thinking that no one would venture on an election without the Archbishop. Seventy Lords assembled ; Karl Knutsson and both the Oxenstjernas were proposed ; but when the votes were collected, it was found that they both had got but eight, while Karl had sixty-two for his share. The people then shouted that they would have no other King, and so they entered the church where the *Te Deum laudamus* was sung ; the Archbishop returned and effected a reconciliation with Karl, who now with his Queen was crowned at Upsala with much pomp and magnificence, and entirely at his own expense, so that he was not obliged to load the peasants with any new tax.*

As soon as Karl had become King, his first business

* This King is called Charles the Eighth, though properly he should have been called Charles the Second ; authentic history knowing but one Charles before him, viz. Karl Swerkersson. But several hundred years ago, a false chronology was made out according to which he was styled Charles the Eighth ; and when its incorrectness was discovered, the old names Charles VIII, IX, and so on were retained as people were accustomed to them.

was to put an end to Erik's piracies. He therefore sent a fleet to Gothland, and succeeded so well that in a short time the whole island and the town of Wisby were in the hands of the Swedes, and King Erik found himself shut up in great distress in Wisborg. Charles, as we shall now call him, even sent messengers into Norway to effect a separation of that country from Denmark, and with such success that in 1449, he was crowned King of Norway in Trondheim; and thus fortune seemed to favour him in the commencement of his reign.

CHAPTER IX.

KARL KNUTSSON'S MISFORTUNES.

BUT this success was not of long duration. The envy of the nobles, the power of the clergy, the want of sense of the people, and the machinations of the Danes, all combined to plunge the kingdom into misery. Mäns Gren got a reinforcement from Denmark, where meanwhile Christian of Oldenburg had been elected King. The Swedes were then obliged to leave the island almost without resistance, and the traitorous Mäns Gren swore a secret oath of fealty to Christian, and promised to help him into the kingdom. At this juncture, King Erik abandoned Gothland, after having lived there ten years from 1439, and crossed over to Pomerania where he lived other ten years with little honour or credit.

A meeting was convened with the Danes in Halmstad, the 5th of February, 1450, and twelve Swedish Lords were appointed to be present, among whom were Nils Jönsson Oxenstjerna and Mäns Gren, of whose

treason Charles was yet unaware. They now determined with the Danes that the Calmar-Union should be upheld; and that whichever of the two sovereigns survived the other should govern both kingdoms. The dispute regarding Gothland was to be settled in a new meeting; and Charles was to resign the crown of Norway. Would he not agree to these conditions, the whole twelve were to give themselves up prisoners to the Danes.

This was precisely against Charles' directions, who had commanded them in what regarded Gothland and Norway not to give in a point. As they afterwards feared his anger, and wanted besides to increase their own power, the greater part of them entered into a secret compact to force him to relinquish his right of placing and displacing Governors of provinces; and in case he did not agree to this, they engaged to offer the crown to Christian on the same conditions. Archbishop Jöns Bengtsson and Bishop Sigge of Strengnäs were chief actors in this treason; but old Bishop Magnus of Åbo, who was ninety-three, was in a great strait whether to break his oath of loyalty to Charles, or his oath of silence to the conspirators. At last the old man went to Charles, and revealed to him these intrigues. Charles was obliged to agree to resign Norway, however much it grieved him to do so; but he did not dare to break the Treaty of Halmstad, as the nobles who had promised to go into captivity would infallibly with their powerful houses have raised a rebellion all over the country. The right of placing Governors he would not resign, but on the contrary deprived the Archbishop, Bishop Sigge, Måns Gren, and Nils Jöns-son of their fiefs as a punishment for their infidelity. Måns Gren then commenced piracies on the Baltic, but

was taken by the Lübeckers, who beheaded one of his people ; but permitted himself to be ransomed by King Christian, who made him the Captain of his troops.

In addition to other misfortunes, the plague again made its appearance, and with such violence that in Stockholm alone nine thousand persons died. Amongst these was Queen Catharine, a heavy affliction for Charles, for not only was she very beautiful and lovely, but also of a mild and lively disposition ; and had often by her gaiety dissipated the gloomy cares which hung over the mind of the King. Their union had ever been the happiest ; no one could recall ever having seen the slightest displeasure between them. She left nine children, the greater number of whom died in their childhood, and none of them ever became very famous.

As Christian was this time unable to gain anything by his plots, he permitted his people to make plundering incursions into Sweden, which Charles retaliated by marching a great army into Skåne in the winter of 1452, ravaging and destroying the whole province. He left in spring, and divided his army, of which the one half under his brother-in-law Gustaf Karlsson subdued Bleking ; the other under Ture Turesson Bjelke and Eggert Kromedik lay idle in Halland, because these leaders were secretly inclined to Christian. Ture had both a Danish mother and Danish wife, and Eggert was descended of a Danish family, and related besides to Charles' enemies the Wasas.

The following spring, the King equipped a great fleet intending to invade Denmark ; but as he was on the point of sailing, he learnt that Christian had fallen on the Swedish coast with a powerful army amongst whom was a body of German mercenaries, and a number of foreign Princes. These troops had spread them-

selves over Småland and West Gothland and commenced besieging the Castles, when Charles abandoning his former design turned his arms against them. But it must be remarked that Lady Brita Tott, wife of Sir Erengisle Nilsson, Governor of Örebro Castle, and one of Charles' most faithful friends was of a Danish family. She therefore sent secret information to her countrymen of all his undertakings, so that he found them everywhere well prepared to receive him. Thus Christian had been enabled, on Charles' arrival in West Gothland, to retire into the fortified Lödöse, against which he could effect nothing. Hearing that the Danish fleet under Måns Gren had attacked Stockholm, and been repelled with great loss, Charles hastened to make the overthrow complete; but Lady Brita had sent notice to her countrymen who were thus able to retire in time with their fleet. Charles then summoned the Senate; but the Archbishop and Bishop Sigge, who had regained their Castles the year before, on their renewed oath of loyalty, broke it now and answered that they would never come to him, on which they made their fortifications still more secure, and wrote to Christian inviting him to Upland where they promised him their assistance. Such was the fidelity Charles received from them, on which soon followed the news of the West Gothlanders with their Bishop having paid homage to Christian, which was done at the secret instigations of Ture Bjelke, who did not choose himself openly to break with Charles.

Charles seeing himself surrounded by traitors on every side, now scarcely knew whom to trust; however fortune favoured him yet once more. Christian was on the road from Jönköping by Hoiweden to East Gothland, when his troops fell into an ambush in the forest

in which Sir Erik Niperts had concealed a body of East Gothlanders. These rushed out on the advancing Danes, killed two hundred of them, took several of the King's Council prisoners, and drove the rest wounded and terrified back out of the wood.

Both Germans and Danes now began to complain of this troublesome warfare. Dysentery and the plague ravaged their camps, so that Christian was at last obliged to retire, and the Germans swore in their broken language: "*In Sweden kame wy nimmer meer.*" "To Sweden come we never again." And thus was Charles freed from his danger.

CHAPTER X.

TORD BONDE.

LÖDÖSE however was still in the possession of the Danes, and the whole of West Gothland was wavering in its faith towards Charles, who at this conjuncture appointed Sir Tord Bonde, Captain of his Forces. He was his first cousin, and though young had made himself already known as a courageous, wise, and experienced warrior.

It was a dark, rainy, and stormy night, when at the head of Charles' men, Sir Tord Bonde rode with haste towards Lödöse; little cared he for storm or rain, but arrived before morning, and the Danes expecting no attack, he had little difficulty in taking all within its walls prisoners; after which he let his servants regale themselves with the enemies' meat and wine, that they might make up for their wet night's journey. There Tord Bonde found a bag of letters, among which were a number from Brita Tott and Ture Bjelke, regarding

their own, the Archbishop's and Bishop Sigge's plots against King Charles. These letters he despatched immediately to the King; but determined at the same time to try if he could surprise Ture Bjelke. He therefore set out with thirty men for Axewalla Castle which Ture Bjelke held, who not knowing that his treachery was discovered, admitted Herr Tord and his servants without hesitation; the latter however had received orders to enter in parties of only four or five together, that they might not excite the suspicion of their enemies. At night as they sat at table, and just as the cabbage was carried in, Tord Bonde seized Ture by the collar and held him fast. His men leapt up to defend their master; but Tord's men prevented them with sword and fist, and the matter ended by Ture and all his men being taken prisoners, and Tord getting the Castle into his power. Ture was then obliged to promise to keep himself quiet in Warnhem Monastery, and his servants at Skara till the King's pleasure regarding them was known.

He meanwhile having received the letters we have mentioned, summoned the Senate to assemble in Stockholm, and laid these papers before them. Such however was the power of the nobility and the envy they bore to Charles, that he was obliged to pardon these traitors and dared not punish them though he had such certain proofs of their evil actions and intentions. He went to West Gothland; but on the news of his approach, Ture and his servants made their escape, contrary to their oath to Eggert Kromedik at Rumlaborg, whence both these felons fled to Denmark.

Tord Bonde meanwhile continued manfully to defend the kingdom against the attacks of Christian who broke into the country several times with his troops,

but was everywhere so valiantly received by Herr Tord, who was now commandant in West Gothland, that he was obliged at last, with great loss and having accomplished nothing, to evacuate Sweden. During this retreat, he built a fortress in Småland which he called Danaborg, and where he left a Danish garrison; but Tord Bonde followed immediately with his men and armed peasantry, the fortress was taken by storm, and the Danes there suffered such a defeat, that the peasants ever after called it the Castle Danasorg, instead of Danaborg.*

Another time Kolbjörn Gast, one of Christian's generals, marched with three thousand men to drive Tord Bonde, who had founded several fortresses there, out of Norway. He had not at that time more than four hundred men with him; but determined nevertheless to venture to exchange blows with Herr Kolbjörn. He therefore concealed a hundred of his men in a clump of forest trees, and with the remaining three hundred attacked the Norwegian forces, who had fortified themselves behind a fence of carriages. When Herr Tord perceived that he could not break through their defence, he and his men turned, pretending to fly. The Normen abandoned their fortress in pursuit; but when he had thus enticed them to some distance, he turned and made such a hard attack, that they could scarcely stand their ground, and a sharp conflict ensued. Herr Tord dealt many a hard blow round him, and two horses were killed under him, when the hundred men rushed from their concealment. They were so ill-armed that they had no iron on their lances; but they rode not the less courageously against the enemy, and sounded a charge on three basoons which they had amongst them.

* Borg, castle, Sorg, sorrow.

At this the Norwegians were quite confused and frightened; they cried that "all the might of Sweden was in arms against them," and dispersed on every side. Even Kolbjörn Gast, their leader, fled to a mountain; but Herr Tord followed hard after, and seized both the leader and his men. He often employed similar stratagems; his watchfulness, wisdom, and bravery kept off the attacks of the Danes, and caused them much annoyance. Neither did Charles' secret and envious enemies dare to undertake anything against him while he had such a defender. Thus his cousin proved the King's chief help and support.

But this brave and faithful hero fell at last by a traitor's hand, as his enemies did not dare in open fight to face him. One of his officers, Jösse Bosson by name, though a Dane by birth, had gained his confidence to such a degree, that he had made him Governor of Karlsborg, a Castle in Bohuslän, and there was not one amongst all his warriors whom he trusted so much as this Jösse. It happened once during these disturbances in Norway, that Tord came to Karlsborg with the intention of passing the night there. Jösse received him joyfully, and begged him to take the repose he so much needed, promising himself to keep the strictest watch in the Castle during the time. He said the same to the servants, and as they were weary, they thanked him for his offer and went to bed. Jösse now got his boats ready, and loaded them with his most precious effects, after which he quietly turned the key on Tord's attendants, hid their swords, and cut their bowstrings, so many precautions did he think it requisite to take before he ventured to attack the heroic Tord Bonde. He then entered his room with an ax in his hand; Tord raised himself a little in his

bed, and asked what he wanted? But instead of an answer, he gave him a heavy blow with the axe, so that he cleft his head down to the shoulders; after which he made his escape to the Danes, at whose instigation he is thought to have committed this felony.

CHAPTER XI.

KING CHARLES'S DEPOSITION.

MEANTIME Charles began to be less and less beloved in the kingdom. With the intention of wearying the Swedes, Christian often used the stratagem of collecting a number of men on the frontiers, pretending to intend an invasion; thus the Swedes were summoned to defence, and obliged to march from every side of the kingdom, but when they arrived, there was no danger in question, and they had only to march home again. This enraged and wearied both the men who were summoned, and the peasants who were to lodge and feed them during their march, and they pronounced Charles' government to be oppressive and bad. Neither were the priests inclined to favour him, since he in 1453, commenced instituting inquiries concerning their large and numerous estates, and reclaiming to the crown property which against the laws of Sweden had been bestowed upon Churches and Convents. These inquiries he was soon obliged to suspend on account of the resistance of the clergy; but he had at least shown his mind towards them by his attempts, and gained their hatred in return. The nobles were against him, because he reserved to himself and his dependants almost all the provinces and their revenues, while he excited their envy by uncommon pomp and splendour.

At one feast, for instance, he displayed fourteen hundred silver dishes, besides a countless number of other articles of gold and silver plate. Thus were the hearts of many of his subjects turned from him, and his old enemy Archbishop Jöns Bengtsson and his relations only awaited a suitable opportunity of letting the rooted hatred they bore him burst into action. But Charles relied on his great wealth, on his courtiers of whom he had two thousand, an uncommon number for that time, and in addition on the Castles which were all in his possession. However he soon came to experience how weak is the Government unsupported by the faith and love of its subjects.

When the Danes no longer needed to fear the dangerous Tord Bonde, they, under Mans Gren, took possession of Öland and Borkholm, and besieged Calmar. Charles hastened against them, and gave the Archbishop the commission to collect more soldiers in Upland, and sent them to him. Four times had Jöns Bengtsson forfeited his allegiance, and as often received pardon on his solemn vows and promises of better faith in future; but now he believed the hour was come for the overthrow of his detested enemy. He therefore gathered his dependants and servants, nailed up to the door of Upsala Cathedral a letter in which he renounced all loyalty and obedience to the King, then entered the Church, took off his archiepiscopal robes before the shrine of Saint Erik, and vowed that he would not again wear that dress until law and right were restored to the land. After this he clad himself in armour, put a helmet on his head, girded his sword on his side, took the officers of Charles prisoners, and plundered their houses. He afterwards marched towards Westerås, where he ordered the Dalmen to meet him. When

Charles heard of these disorders, he hurried with a small troop northwards, hoping to surprise the Archbishop in Westerås; but he was too active to permit this, and Charles was himself surprised at Strengnäs. His people attacked when but half awake; and before they had been able to get into order were soon beaten and dispersed; and he, wounded as he was, with difficulty escaped on an old miserable horse accompanied by a single servant to Stockholm. He immediately caused both suburbs to be burnt, that he might the better resist a siege. The Archbishop soon arrived on his traces, and commenced his preparations for besieging the town; but as Charles did not think himself strong enough to resist, and also could not put much dependance in the citizens, he determined to quit the country. He caused a part of his money and treasures to be concealed in the convent of the Black Friars, and the rest were carried on board a ship sailing for Dantzic. As Charles was going on board himself, one of the Archbishop's secret friends, asked him: "If he had forgotten anything?" "Nothing," said Charles, "but to hang you and your comrades." After this he entered the vessel, and set sail. He was very well received in Dantzic by the Hanseatic Towns, as by the King of Poland; and published a manifesto against the Swedish Lords, offering to stand to trial with them before proper judges. But in Sweden, every one abandoned the unhappy King. The Archbishop took Stockholm in a few days, and two of Charles' daughters who were there, were without compassion put on board a little vessel, which in the midst of the cold and stormy winter was to carry them over to Pomerania, whence they were themselves forced to seek for their banished father in Dantzic.

CHAPTER XII.

KING CHRISTIAN THE FIRST.

THE Archbishop intended to call in King Christian ; but so great was the hatred entertained for foreign masters, that he was obliged to promise both peasants and burghers that he would appoint no foreign King to the country. The breach of a promise was but a trifle with Jöns Bengtsson, and so he and his partizans wrote privately to Christian, and begged him to hasten with his fleet to Stockholm. Christian arrived, and the people knew nothing of the matter until he was introduced into the capital by the Archbishop and his party, and crowned in Upsala the 29th of July, 1457. Shortly after his son John received homage as his successor. An action was commenced against Charles who was pronounced a traitor by his enemies, and forfeited all his possessions in Sweden ; and now Christian thought himself securely seated on the Swedish throne.

This King reigned some years in peace and quiet, and he was neither a bad man, nor an unskilful Prince; but he was too weak to head the Government in such a stormy period, and committed many faults which dragged him at last from the throne. The promises to which he had sworn with the most sacred oaths at his coronation, he boldly broke ; and though this was too common in those hideous times, it nevertheless caused wrath and indignation, and gave his enemies room for open complaint. Meanwhile the Archbishop persuading him that the friends of Charles intended to recall him, he caused them to be taken up and examined by torture. Being innocent and having nothing to reveal, he was

obliged to set them at liberty: but neither they, nor their many relatives and friends ever forgave him, and became in consequence but the more devoted to Charles. Neither did it please the Swedes that the traitors, Sir Måns Gren, Sir Ture Bjelke, and many others who had borne arms against their country were now not only recalled, but honoured with the King's confidence, and the highest and most important offices in the State. What most irritated the people, however, against Christian was his avarice. He began to borrow from his subjects, sometimes larger, sometimes smaller sums; but never repaid them. As soon as he heard of the treasures which Charles had concealed in the Dominican Convent, he had them carried off; and when some one put it into his head, that Charles had also hidden treasure in some other places, he broke up the walls of the Castle here and there, caused the bottom of the lake to be well searched round the fortifications, and even had the great ball on the top of one of the towers of the Castle taken down and broken up in the hope of finding money concealed in it. At last he sent for a woman to Denmark, who was thought able by witchcraft to find concealed treasures; and laid heavy and unjust taxes on the people, under all manner of pretences. These were paid the first and second time; but when the third and heaviest tribute was imposed, the people positively refused, made a serious revolt, and declared they would pay no more taxes to such a miserly and insatiable King. The Archbishop, who was unable to get the peasants to pay, did not venture to compel them, and promised instead to get the tax entirely removed. At this proposal Christian was highly displeased,⁶ the more so as he already feared both the power and arrogance of the Archbishop. He there-

fore took him suddenly prisoner in the Castle of Stockholm, and carried him to Copenhagen where he was confined in 1463. A violent commotion now broke out. The peasants were highly irritated at the Archbishop having had this to suffer for his efforts to free them from the unlawful imposition. Charles' former partisans began to lift up their heads, and the relations and family of the imprisoned Prelate burnt for revenge. Kettil Karlsson Wase, who was his first cousin, set himself at the head of the insurgents, who joined him from all sides so that he was able to besiege Stockholm, and take many other Castles. When Christian heard this news, he marched with a great army to the capital, and the Swedes drew back into Dalarna. The King followed; but when he reached Hälle Forest in Westmanland, Bishop Kettil, Sten Sture, and the whole Swedish force lay in ambush awaiting his arrival, and attacked him vigorously. The Danish army was beaten, and suffered so complete a defeat, that Christian with its poor remains fled to Stockholm; but not even venturing to stop there, set sail with his fleet for Denmark. The Swedes now unanimously resolved to recall Charles, and Ambassadors were sent to him to that effect to Dantzic. He sailed back to Stockholm, promised full pardon to his enemies, and thus in 1464 was for the second time King of Sweden.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHARLES, KING FOR THE SECOND TIME.

WHEN Charles returned to Stockholm, many of the chief Lords and nobles of Denmark who had been shut up in the Castle were obliged to surrender themselves

as prisoners, and give up at the same time several good ships which lay in the harbour. But soon after, Charles with his usual confidence, trusting to their fair words and promises of "never more fighting against him and Sweden, and certainly concluding a firm and lasting peace between him and King Christian," permitted them, without further security, to return with their ships to Denmark. When Bishop Kettil, on his reaching Stockholm after an expedition against the Danes, heard what had happened, he was wrathful in the highest degree against Charles, and said to him without reserve, "That it was for their own misfortune that they had brought him back, for he caused them now both shame and mischief. The Bishop and his friends, and not Charles had conquered the Danes, and therefore he had no right to deliver the prisoners without their consent." Bishop Kettil was even so bold as to repossess himself by force of the Danish vessels which had not got beyond the Skares, and thus new enmity broke out between the King and the Lords.

The Bishop wrote immediately to Christian, saying, that "If the Archbishop regained his liberty, Christian should be again King of Sweden." Christian, who saw that single-handed he should not be able to conquer Charles, made a speedy reconciliation with the Archbishop, and sent him with an army to Sweden. All his former partisans fell in an instant from Charles; his general, Bo Dyr, a brother of Tord Bonde, was deceived by the Archbishop into a truce, and then treacherously attacked by him and completely defeated. Charles himself was shut up in Stockholm by the Archbishop with Bishop Kettil and the greater number of the Senators. He attempted a sally over the ice by the Riddarholm; but was driven back with great loss.

The Dalmen came marching down to relieve him, but Bishop Kettil advanced to meet them, and persuaded them to turn back again. Abandoned and betrayed on every side, Charles was finally obliged to resign the crown, and content himself with Raseborg Castle in Finland as a fief. He therefore crossed to Åbo in 1465, where he was long obliged to remain in the Dominican Convent before he could be put in possession of the above-mentioned Castle; and then had so little of his former riches remaining, that he was unable to pay a debt of fifty marks which he owed in Stockholm; and it is said that he then composed the following doggerel on himself:

While I was Lord of Fogelwich,
I was a mighty man and rich.
But since I'm King of Swedish ground,
A poorer man was never found.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHARLES, KING FOR THE THIRD TIME.

ARCHBISHOP Jöns Bengtsson and Bishop Kettil Wase were now the most powerful men in the whole kingdom. The Archbishop called himself "Sweden's Prince," and Bishop Kettil "Administrator of the kingdom." It is believed that the Archbishop's party intended to divide Sweden into four quarters, and place four of their chief leaders in them as Kings; but despairing of this, they continued to uphold Christian. They were obliged, however, to carry on their projects with the greatest secrecy, for the peasants and citizens, and many amongst the nobles, and clergy were so irritated against the Danes that they could not en-

dure even to hear Christian's name mentioned. Meanwhile the Archbishop desired to govern the country according to his own will ; but met with more opposition in this than he had imagined. The nobles at a Diet, chose Erik Axelson Tott as Administrator, and that directly contrary to the Archbishop's will. The peasants were discontented with his governing the country, and said that " Sweden had of old been a kingdom and not a parish ;" and even the Chapter of Upsala wrote to him, " To attend to his Bishopric and not meddle with worldly Government." But his restless, ambitious spirit left him no repose, and so irritated the people against him that they began once more to speak of King Charles. Nils Sture of Penningeby, not a powerful, but a very bold and brave man, was the first who set himself openly to act against the Archbishop in favour of Charles. His party acquired still more weight by the powerful Iwar Axelson Tott becoming Christian's enemy, and marrying one of Charles' daughters, by which means this Iwar and his equally powerful brother, the Administrator, devoted themselves to Charles and abandoned Christian, whose most zealous friends they had formerly been.

In this manner there were in fact three parties in the country : viz. the Archbishop with his friends the Oxenstjernas and Wasas ; the Totts with their partisans ; and finally both Nils and Sten Sture who openly sided with Charles. The condition of the country was frightful ; armed bodies of the different partisans poured through the land in every direction, pursuing each other, and pillaging the peasantry and the unprotected. There was neither security, order, nor Government to be found which could procure justice for the innocent ; all was internal envy and bitterness. One noble strove

with another, murdered his servants, and plundered his dependants. The very peasants had different parties. The Uplanders, particularly from Fjerdhundra helped the Archbishop; the Dalmen and Gestrikers sided with the Totts; others again with the Stures, and this continued to be the state of things nearly two years. At last the Totts and Stures gradually approximated, and determined to recall Charles, whom the peasants who were by this time wearied out by these quarrels of their masters began eagerly to desire. The Archbishop's party on the other hand daily decreased; his zealous and brave assistant Bishop Kettel had died in 1466, and the Bishop's brother, the equally brave and bold leader, Erik Karlsson Wase, who had long sustained the Archbishop's cause in Sweden, was at last obliged to give way before the Stures and Dalmen. The Archbishop found himself insecure in Upland, and therefore crossed to Öland to be so much the nearer Denmark. At the same time Charles returned from Finland, and was received the third time as King. It seemed as if the ambitious Prelate could not endure this victory of his hated rival, for he died a few weeks after in Öland, in anger, poverty, and banishment, wept by none, hated by the most, and dreaded by all. Christian lost in him his last support, and Charles thought he felt the crown sit firmer on his head now that his bitterest and most formidable adversary was no more.

It now seemed as if Charles would keep his kingdom in peace; but many struggles yet awaited him. Though Erik Wase had forsaken Christian and sworn fealty and obedience to Charles, he broke his oath, and instigated a new insurrection, not in Christian's favour but his own. He soon collected a number of peasants from Fjerdhundra, and marched with them to Upsala.

Charles sent Bo Dyre against him with an army, but Bo suffered himself again to be deceived into a truce, during which he was treacherously attacked and beaten by Erik. Sten Sture now arrived with three hundred men at arms, and twenty thousand peasants from Södermanland, Dalarna, and Roslagen; but Herr Erik Wasa had thirty thousand peasants and eight hundred men at arms. When the armies met, a violent mutiny broke out against Sten Sture, his men shouting, "Down with him!" so that he, with the troops who remained faithful to him, was obliged to seek safety in Dalarna. The rest dispersed, and the Södermanlanders promised Erik "never more to bear arms for Karl Knutsson."

Charles had meanwhile collected an army in Roslagen; but this was attacked at Knutby and altogether routed by Erik Wasa. This gave him great courage, and he wrote to his "dear wife" begging her "to rejoice and be glad for all were falling at his feet. Ay, and he even hoped that his dear wife should wear the crown of Sweden, if not this year, at least before another had elapsed." But a struggle yet remained before him. He heard that Nils and Sten Sture had collected troops in Dalarna for the assistance of Charles; he marched therefore in that direction with an army of more than thirty thousand men, and his troops were so certain of victory that they had a number of empty sledges with them on which they intended to drive off the spoil they hoped to take from the Dalmen. Thus Erik advanced through Hedemora till within twelve miles of Falun, where Sten Sture met him with five hundred men, and set up the banner of the Valleys. Erik Karlsson made several violent attacks on it, but Herr Sten had chosen his place so well, and defended it so valiantly with his Dalmen, that Erik Wasa and

his people were at last obliged to retire with great loss. Shortly after Nils Sture arrived with the host of the Dalmen, and a battle ensued at Upphöga Ferry, in which Erik met with a complete defeat, and his army was cut to pieces or dispersed in such panic that unarmed women took many of the flying soldiers prisoners. Erik himself dared not stop before he had reached Denmark ; and so vanished the crown which he had so proudly promised to put on his wife's head.

Christian, who meanwhile had been hindered by other causes from drawing any advantage from these disturbances, now invaded West Gothland and laid siege to Öresten. Charles sent his chief support, the young Knight Herr Sten Sture to its defence. He fought manfully with the Danes, and though their King was himself a brave man, and his people defended themselves well, they were at last obliged to give in, and Christian severely wounded was obliged to fly to Denmark, after which Nils and Sten Sture drove the enemy out of the country.

Charles was thus at last firmly seated on his throne ; his internal enemies were partly dead, partly overcome ; his foreign enemies defeated ; his people wearied of continual warfare sighed for peace, and finally the brave Totts and Stures stood the secure props of his power. But this unfortunate monarch was not long permitted to enjoy this quiet. He fell seriously ill in May 1470, and feeling the approach of death, named Sten Sture Administrator of the kingdom, and entrusted him with the Castle of Stockholm, at the same time warning him never to strive for the royal dignity : "That ambition," said the dying King, "has ruined my happiness and cost me my life."

Thus did Charles VIII, at the age of sixty-two, finish

a life, the commencement of which had been so splendid, but whose continuation became so full of the bitterest afflictions and reverses. It is difficult to say if the lenient and too easy confidence which he showed traitors and enemies were the effects of artifice thought necessary at the time, or if they were caused by generosity of disposition, and proceeded from a firm confidence in the protection of the Almighty of which he so often spoke. It is however certain that this conduct, joined to the hatred of the brave, obstinate, artful, and faithless Archbishop were the chief origin of Charles' many misfortunes.

BOOK XI.

OF STEN STURE THE ELDER.

CHAPTER I.

STEN STURE.

THE old Stures were descended of a very noble race, long since extinct. Born of this family, and nearly related to the Wasas and Bondes, Sten Sture already enjoyed a consideration which was increased by his own virtues. He was brave, bold and experienced in war; skilful, wise, and prudent in the Government of the state; just, upright, and persevering in all his undertakings. Well knowing how easily the envy of the other nobles could be excited, he took great care after he became Administrator not to irritate them by outward pomp or unseasonable domination. He did not even strike coin in his own name, though he had long been Regent; but where his authority was really concerned, all were made to perceive that he was not a man to be trifled with. Of remarkable truthfulness himself, "I promise by my three water-lilies," (the arms of the Stures) was his oath, and it was more to be relied on than the most solemn engagements of Kings and Prelates.

After the death of Charles VIII, great disunion again broke out in the land; the Danish partisans, Erik Karlsson Wasa, Iwar Månson Gren, Trolle Karlsson, and several others objecting that Karl Knutsson not

having been really King himself had no right to dispose of the kingdom refused to recognize Sir Sten as Administrator, and kept themselves fast to King Christian, in whose favour they sought to excite the people. This however succeeded but ill, for the peasants had always hated the Danes and been devoted to the Stures, and they were now the more irritated against Christian because he had cut off their supplies of herring and salt, and they bitterly felt the want of these necessary articles. The citizens of Stockholm and the Dalmen were faithful to Sture, and exhorted each other to stand by him. Their loyalty would have been but of little avail had the all-powerful nobility and the clergy been his enemies; but he had the advantage of having the newly elected Archbishop Jacob Ulfsson Örnefot on his side, the brave Nils Sture whom the peasants loved, and the two brothers Erik and Iwar Axelsson Tott, who were as powerful by their riches as by their large fiefs. By these means Sture gradually gained the upper hand. After many bloody battles in Upland, Erik and Trotte Karlsson, and the rest of Christian's friends were driven out of the country, and several useless meetings having been held, a general Diet was convened and held at Arboga, where Sten Sture, on the 1st of May, 1471, was accepted, and received the homage of all as the Administrator and Captain General of the country. It is said that a waggon load of German ale was sent from Stockholm to Arboga to animate the peasants, who were before devoted to him, which succeeded in making them so noisy in their acclamations that the envious Lords dared not venture a word against his election.

CHAPTER II.

THE BATTLE OF BRUNKEBERG.

WHEN Christian saw that his party in Sweden was insufficient to help him without assistance, he equipped a great fleet and sailed with it to Stockholm, where he anchored off the island now called Skeppsholm. There he commenced negotiations with the Swedish Senate, promising "to make up for his former faults, pay his debts, govern the kingdom according to the form they should themselves prescribe, and in every respect be to them a mild and merciful father." Many were for Christian, but the greater part were against him; however a truce was concluded and the negotiations continued. The Danes were permitted to buy their provisions in the town, and Christian on his side sold salt to the Swedes of which there was a great dearth. Meanwhile Christian made no progress with his treaty, and perceived at last that it was the intention of the Swedes to spin out the time till his provisions were consumed, and winter would destroy his fleet. After seven weeks' vain expectation, he at last determined to try the success of war, and landed on the 1st of September with all the army on the Norrmalm, on which at that time scarce a house was built except the Convent of St. Clair. He pitched his camp on Brunkeberg, and raised bulwarks and earthen ramparts towards the town, from which his cannon continually disturbed the town's people. His fleet lay at Blasieholm, and he threw a strong bridge over Näckström, a sound now closed, that he might maintain communication between his fleet and his camp. Thus Christian seemed well prepared for the siege of Stockholm, and at the same

time sent Erik Karlsson Wasa, Trotte Karlsson and several other of his Swedish adherents into Upland to procure him assistance from the peasants, enticing them with the promise of finding cheap salt in his camp. Many of them who came to the Danish camp to buy were detained, and the Swedish Lords succeeded in collecting some bodies of Uplanders to Christian's aid, but they were not very numerous, neither did he imagine that he stood much in need of their assistance. His great army consisted of the principal Danish nobles and their troops, of brave, stout and experienced Scottish and German soldiers of fortune who daily exercised themselves in warlike sports, and led a merry and unconcerned life in camp. Christian in his pride promised to "build and dwell in Stockholm;" and when he was told that Sture was marching through the country collecting the peasantry against him, he said: "Herr Sten sneaks along ditches and dykes, but I shall punish my little gentleman with the rod like a child, and teach him to keep himself quiet." The foreign soldiers also broke into fierce threats against the citizens, thus irritating them the more to hatred and resistance.

When Christian began to besiege Stockholm, the Administrator marched south, and drove away the enemies who were forcing the frontiers. With the West Gothlanders he defeated a large body of Danes at Herljunga, after which the West Gothlanders themselves took Elfsborg, and razed Axewalla Castle to the ground. He then crossed through East Gothland, Södermanland and Nerke, collecting a large army from these provinces, and advanced with them to Stockholm. At Rotebro he was met by the brave Nils Sture with the Dalmen, and the united armies marched

to Jerfva. From hence Sture wrote several letters to King Christian offering him safe and free passage home, if he would leave Sweden without force; but Christian swore "by God's five wounds, that he had not given himself so much trouble and expense to return home with an unexecuted commission." As all attempts at a peaceful conclusion failed, both armies prepared themselves to fight, and the sword was now to determine if Sweden was to be a free country or not.

It was the 10th of October 1471, that this remarkable battle took place. Long before break of day, the Swedes began to furbish their weapons and prepare for the bloody game; and early in the morning the whole army was summoned to a solemn service. A priest honoured and respected for his piety and devotion performed mass before the Holy Cross, and administered the Sacrament to the men, who thought in their holy enthusiasm that they saw a drop of blood from the Saviour's wounds fall into the cup as a celestial call to them boldly to venture their own blood in the sacred cause. Sten Sture then let the men go to the provision booths, where they took a hurried meal for their refreshment, and meanwhile despatched Nils Sture with a third of the troops round by the wood to attack the Danish camp, and Brunkeberg from the east side. After this the Administrator marshalled his ranks, and thirteen hundred riders joined him from Kungsholm clad in armour polished like ice, who were sent by Knut Posse from the town to his assistance. Then Sten Sture spoke to the people and said: "If you ever desire to enjoy peace or security in Sweden stand this day by me, and depart not from one another. I shall do my part; I fear not the King, his Danes and

satellites, but gladly venture life, and blood, and all that I possess in this battle. If ye will do the same, lift up your hands !”

“That we will do with God’s help !” cried the whole army, and lifted up their hands, striking their shields, and making a great shout and clashing of arms, after which they marched towards Brunkeberg, singing the verse of a Psalm composed for the occasion. It was now eleven o’clock in the forenoon.

King Christian had no intention of flying. Strong, courageous, and well-exercised in all knightly and warlike exercises, he was determined here at once to revenge his former defeat, to acquire glory, and win back a whole kingdom at one blow. The proud and brave Danish nobility, headed by the Marshal Klas Rönnow ; the traitorous Swedish Lords under the dauntless and ambitious Erik Wasa, and Trotte Karlsson ; the German and Scottish soldiers, lead by their renowned captains, looked fearlessly from their commanding position down on the advancing Swedes burning with the desire to engage. Guns and arrows opened the attack ; but when the Swedes were pressing up the ascent, the Danes met them and the bloody strife with lance and sword commenced. The national banners met ; the Swedish flag began to ascend the hill, and from the summit waved Danneborg the sacred standard of the Danes. The bravest of both parties crowded round these, and pressed on each other. Neither would yield. The Danes led by a chivalrous King fought for glory, power, and riches ;—the Swedish peasant followed his beloved leader Sten Sture fighting for peace, freedom and fatherland.

Knut Posse, who commanded the Castle of Stockholm, was a good soldier, and entirely devoted to the

Administrator. The wife of the latter, Lady Ingeborg Tott, was in the Castle at the time, and before the battle began called up the poor of the town to her, gave them food and liberal alms, that their prayers might bring her husband and the Swedes with victory out of the combat. Afterwards accompanied by many ladies and maidens, she mounted the highest tower of the Castle, whence they could see the battle field, and there with ardent prayers and beating hearts they awaited the issue of the combat.

But the bold and ardent Knut Posse was by no means minded to stand idly within the walls, looking on his fighting countrymen. Remarking that the bridge the Danes had made between Blasieholm and their fleet was without a guard, he ordered some of the citizens to row there unobserved in the heat of the battle, and with saws and axes to sever the chief supports and beams under the bridge, and this stratagem succeeded perfectly. He himself made a hasty sally with two thousand of the garrison, and possessed himself of Christian's fortifications towards the town and set them on fire. Sten Sture's people had meanwhile been obliged to retire down the hill, so that Christian was able to turn all his force against Knut Posse. This bold warrior had, with his handful of men, pressed so close on the King, that he had received a wound from the King's own hand. However he was obliged to give way before superior numbers and retreat over the bridge again into the town; and thus ended the first attack.

Herr Sten again encouraged his people, saying "it would be to their eternal shame if they suffered themselves here to be repulsed." He soon got them into order, and again led them towards the hill. The

Danes met them and both armies now engaged with not less courage and energy than before. Herr Sten every where gave the example and exhorted to courage : he fought on horseback, and a peasant named Björn, the Strong, ran before him. Herr Sten could not ride quicker than Björn Bonde was able to run, swinging his broad battle-sword with such strength round his head, that he every where opened a road amongst the Danes for his brave leader to advance in. They were often seen surrounded by enemies, but God's grace and their own bravery assisted them wonderfully through, so that they were not even wounded. King Christian also proved himself a valiant leader of valiant men. In the middle of the battle, a ball flew through his mouth, knocking out three teeth, so that the blood gushed out, and he was carried fainting from the fight. His bold captains however did not lose courage, they drove the crowding Swedes back with energy, and they who were vainly looking for assistance from Herr Nils Sture, were forced the second time to leave the height ; and the ladies on the towers of the Castle who had so lately rejoiced in the sight of the Swedish banner waving on the summit, now beheld in grief and despair how it again sunk beneath the edge amidst the victorious Danes. The battle had raged three hours, and the victory was not yet decided ; but both armies were wearied with fighting. Herr Trotte Karlsson who had fought with the foremost, sate himself on a stone to repose, and loosed the helmet from his head to breathe the fresh air ; but at the same moment a ball from the Swedish army struck him between the eyes, so that this warrior fell like a traitor fighting amongst strangers against his native land. And thus ended the second attack. †

The Administrator now saw that it was impossible in this way to dislodge the enemy from their commanding post, and therefore caused a diversion to be made by directing an attack on the forces posted at the Convent of St. Claire. When the Danes on the height saw this, they forsook their advantageous position, and descended the hill to assist their friends, believing that they had entirely beat off the Swedes. It must be confessed that at this period when there was not much military discipline, it was a great proof of the perseverance of the latter, and of the skill of Sten Sture, that after two repulsed attacks he was again able to marshal his troops, and lead them on a third time. However it now so happened. No sooner did the Swedes perceive that their enemies had descended the hill, than they shouted, "Now have the Danes come to us on equal ground! Let us swing our swords freely!" and required no encouragement from Herr Sten. Some bright streaks of light were seen across the sky: they crying that it was "St. Erik's sword which waved over his people to protect them and point the way to victory," threw themselves on the enemy, while Herr Knut Posse made a fresh sally from the town. Against these efforts all the courage of the enemy was vain. They fought in the beginning for victory; but it was soon snatched from them; they then fought to rescue the holy Danneborg banner, and they fought with immortal bravery. Five hundred Danish nobles who surrounded and defended the standard fell around it under the swords of the Swedes, before Sir Knut Posse was able to bow its proud point to the ground. Then fled the Danes, but only with the intention of defending themselves on the height, when at this juncture Nils Sture with his troops who had been detained

by bad roads arrived, and resistance became vain. Their ranks were dispersed, and rushed like a cloud down the heights of Brunkeberg towards Blasieholm. They hastened away from the pursuing Swedes, seeking safety in their ships; but when the heavy multitude poured on the bridge which had been sawed, it burst, and the unhappy fugitives plunged into the water. Others leapt into boats in the hopes of crossing; but so many crowded into each that they sunk, and the people were lost. Thus nine hundred men were drowned in the Näckström, and every avenue of flight being now shut up, nine hundred more who had not been able to escape, threw down their arms and surrendered. Among these was the Danish Marshal, Klas Rönnow, as well as the traitors Ture Bjelke and Nils Kristerson Wasc.

This bloody battle had lasted four hours, or till three o'clock in the afternoon, but by that time it was fought to an end. Christian escaped on board his ships, and Sten Sture entered Stockholm with his triumphant troops, where there was great rejoicing and gladness. Fru Ingeborg received her victorious Lord with tears of joy; and soldiers and citizens offered to God their mingled thanks for this glorious victory. The rejoicing however was not unmixed, for many had lost their friends and relations in the battle; the two unsuccessful attacks on Brunkeberg had cost many a stout soldier his life; and that square on which the Swedes now so secure, and proudly contemplate the greatest riches and magnificence of their capital, was then thickly strewn with the mangled corpses of those who, by their courage and with their blood, founded the freedom and security of Sweden. Sten Sture had the bodies of these fallen sons and defenders of their

country collected for a solemn and magnificent funeral amidst the ringing of bells, and the song of the choir boys. The dead Danes were also brave men who had followed their King ; but the irritated Swedes saw in them but enemies, avaricious and ambitious adventurers, whose bodies were cast anywhere into the soil out of the reach of the wild beasts and birds of prey.

Among those who had made their escape with Christian in his fleet were a number of his allies, the Upland peasants, whom some of the Danes, burning with rage and disappointment, now wanted to cut down ; but Christian forbade, and had them landed on the Skares, after which he continued his homeward course, pursued even at sea by storms and misfortunes. When the Danes reflected on their numbers, bravery and excellent position in this battle, they could not conceive how the Swedes had been able to snatch the victory from their grasp. The superstitious people averred that it had been through the magic arts of Klas Rytting, the Swedish Chancellor ; but King Christian never again ventured with the might of arms to attack Sten Sture and the Swedish peasantry.

CHAPTER III.

OF STEN STURE'S GOVERNMENT.

SWEDEN after this battle enjoyed many years of peace and repose. The Danes did not dare again to exchange blows ; and the invasions of the Russians in Finland did not cause any remarkable disturbance on the other side of the Baltic. Sten Sture proved himself a great and excellent Governor in peace as well as in war, and improved and settled the state of the

country as much as he, in so difficult a period, was able to effect so desirable an end. By the power and influence of the Hanseatic towns, a portion of the corporation of every trading town was composed of Germans. Herr Sten put an end to this, ordaining that the town councils should consist of Swedes alone; however, he always maintained great friendship with the Hanseatic League, which was a support to him against the machinations of the Danes. The art of printing was introduced, and the first book printed in Sweden in 1483. When Archbishop Jacob Ulfsson heard that the King and the Archbishop of Denmark had got permission of the Pope to found an University there, he and the Administrator thought that Sweden should not be inferior to Denmark, and mutually addressed themselves to the Pope to gain the same favour. They succeeded, and the University of Upsala was founded.

What made the Government of the kingdom most difficult for Sten Sture, was the great power of the nobles. These sat in their fortified castles, and had always a crowd of armed dependants for their defence. According to the regulations of those times they gave the law to their subjects and peasants, so that each was an independent Prince; but this gave rise to continual disorders. Ever accustomed to rule, they did not like to obey even their Sovereign; they entered into bloody disputes with one another, from which the country suffered, and their peasants became greatly impoverished and distressed, and were often forced to sell their land; as their Lords by their great riches were in condition to buy new acres and farms, the number of free peasants in this manner gradually decreased, and no remedy was to be found so long as the clergy and nobility were sole masters of the Diets, and decided all

that was to be done. It was for this reason that Sten Sture called the citizens and peasants to the Diets, that they, by their numbers, might balance the importance of the others. This custom was continued by the other Stures and the Kings of the House of Wasa; and by this means the cultivators of the soil in Sweden have been free and respected, while in most other countries they have sunk into contempt and slavery.

The Administrator appointed no new Senators in the places of those who were dead, intending thus to weaken the Senate, and decrease the importance of the nobles, who were already too powerful without that additional dignity. An idea may be formed of the might of the nobles of that time when we hear that Nils Klasson of Wik, one of that order, declared war and armed privateers against the King of England, because he had taken one of Sir Nil's ships, and did not choose to pay for it. Iwar Axelsson Tott had yet higher pretensions. His brother Erik Axelsson left at his death in 1479, the command he held in Finland to Sir Iwar instead of to the Swedish Government as he had promised. The third brother, Sir Lars Axelsson Tott did the same thing. Iwar possessed great fiefs both under the Swedish and Danish crown, so that he was one of the most influential men in the north which rendered him proud and vain-glorious. He desired to place his son, Sir Arwid Trolle as Administrator. Denmark he threatened with war. He alarmed the Swedes with threats of giving up his Castles to the Danes, and the Danes with threats of making over his strongholds in their country to the Swedes. He interrupted the commerce in the Baltic by his piracies, and would listen to no representations; but showed pride and contempt of all. Fortunately he was neither so wise nor

so brave as he was rich and haughty. The Swedes found themselves at last obliged to attack him by force; his fortresses soon fell into their power, and he escaped by a cowardly and mean flight to throw himself into the arms of John, King of Denmark. The King did not let the opportunity pass; but seized on all his Danish fiefs, and thus the once mighty and proud Iwar Axelsson Tott, died poor and despised.

Though King Christian, after the battle of Brunkeberg, did not venture on open war, his continual effort was to regain the Swedish crown. Meetings were held almost every year between the Swedish and Danish Lords regarding the renewal of the Union; but Sir Sten's prudence, and the general hatred that was borne to Christian prevented their success. Christian died in the midst of these negotiations in 1481. His son and successor King John, in the warmth of his youthful courage and ambition, longed to invade Sweden; but his mother Queen Dorothea, who had been married both to Christopher and Christian, was acquainted with the bravery and disunion of the Swedes, and on her earnest advice, John abstained from open war, but continued like his father to carry on secret machinations in the country. In this he had better success; the priests under the guidance of Jacob Ulfsson, now as ever inclined to the Union; the chief nobles feared Sten Sture's increasing power, and thought they would have more freedom and consideration under a foreign Sovereign; they even hated him for favouring as they said, the lower orders, though they did not dare to break out openly against a man who possessed as they affirmed, "as many soldiers as peasants." The people generally did not feel the same rooted hatred for John as for Christian;

but instead something of the interest which always accompanies youth. Thus Herr Sten was not able to prevent John being elected King at a Diet held in Calmar in 1483. The oath which he, however, was obliged on this occasion to swear, deserves to be cited as a proof of the great power the Senators had at that time. John promised: "To give back Gothland to Sweden; to lay on no tax without the consent of the subjects; to separate no district; to decree or annul no ordination; to appoint or discharge no Governor of castles; to begin no war; to grant no privileges without the consent of the Senate. Neither the King's relations, nor men not noble by birth were to be permitted to purchase noble land. The King was to dwell a year in each kingdom, and only to bring four foreigners in with him. The King was to show the Senate all honour and respect, and the Senator who betrayed the councils of the Senate to the King, and sought by such means to gain his favour was to be declared unworthy of his office. Every nobleman, whether ecclesiastical or lay, was to be considered King of his own castle which he could fortify as he pleased, and refuse admittance, even to the King himself. The clergy were to be maintained in their privileges. The King was to pay his father's debts, and listen to reproofs and exhortations without displeasure, &c. &c."

To these hard and partly degrading conditions, the King consented for the vain honour of being called King of one kingdom more, when he was unable properly to govern the two of which he was already possessed; and the Senators were happy in being able to snatch the kingdom from the good Government of Sten Sture to leave it in foreign rule, that they might themselves get freedom of hand to do what they pleased.

But Herr Sten was not so easily to be excluded. He did not set himself openly against John, but promised to accept him as soon as he had fulfilled the conditions of his election as regarded Gothland; and this John on his side refused to do until he had been crowned. Time was drawn out in negotiations; meeting after meeting was appointed, some of which Sir Sten made of no avail by absenting himself on account of his weak eyes; at others nothing of any importance was settled. Thus he employed might against might, and craft against craft; and King John, unable to gain his object, tried by other means to compel the Swedes. He encouraged Iwar Tott in the commotions he had caused; but as we have already seen, they were soon overcome. He influenced the Pope to excommunicate Herr Sten and the Swedes; but they disregarded the papal thunder; and Hemming Gad, Sture's best friend went to Rome, and succeeded in getting the excommunication recalled. Besides these means John, as Christian had been, was cruel and inhuman enough to incite the Russians to new and dreadful ravages in Finland, by which means alone he succeeded in the end in wearing out the Swedes, and overcoming the man who supported by the love and well-being of the people, feared the Danish arms as little as the plots of internal enemies.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RUSSIAN WAR.

It was not long after the battle of Brunkberg that the Russians in 1475 made their first plundering excursion in Finland; and they continued these invasions

afterwards, partly by inclination, partly because they were incited by the Danish Kings, so that Finland could never find peace. The bold and warlike Erik Karlsson Wase had been reconciled to Sten Sture, and sent by him to Finland. Three years he defended the land against the Russians, and gave proofs of his invincible courage. He was at last killed by some servants of a Bishop, and peasants of Sela-Island, because he had lodged by force the pastor Sigfrid of Sela. Erik Axelsson Tott who possessed large fiefs in Finland, as long as he lived, with a powerful hand drove the Russians back; but it was always difficult to fight against them, for they broke in unexpectedly and in large hordes; ruined and burnt extensive tracts, tortured and murdered the inhabitants in the most cruel manner, and then hurried off as hastily as they had come with the spoil they had gathered.

At last the brave Knut Posse was appointed Governor of Wiborg; and by his courage, prudence, and activity, he repelled the Russians wherever he met them; but his small army gradually melted away in these victories, while the enemies remained in countless hordes. In 1495, the invaders spread over east Finland. All fled before them to seek shelter in the fortresses, and Knut Posse himself was hardly beset in Wiborg. The Russians had cannon with which they succeeded in breaching the walls; but Knut Posse had thrown up new bulwarks behind, which kept them out. In this manner he defended himself manfully during two months, and caused the Russians many disasters, which, however, told but little on their vast numbers. They at last resolved to storm the fortress on the 30th of November. They poured out in a countless multitude, and soon mastered one of the walls and the

tower commanding it. They found it abandoned by the Swedes, and looking down saw Knut Posse with his steel-clad warriors standing in good order in the town with the banners of St. Erik and St. Olof waving above their heads. This prudent commander had placed a quantity of gunpowder under the tower, and then withdrawn with his men; seeing the tower and the wall swarming with Russians, who intended to rush down into the town, he set fire to the train. With a dreadful explosion the tower and the men who crowded it blew up; the wall fell and crushed the besiegers who fell dead or insensible to the ground. Knut Posse then rushed out of the town to attack the terrified enemy, who fled on every side full of horror and alarm; the Swedes followed, and cut down many thousands almost without resistance. A general panic struck the ranks; they fled headlong over the frontier pursued in their course by the enraged peasantry.

This stratagem of Sir Knut Posse was afterwards called "The Wiborg Crack," and has been much celebrated. The ignorant and superstitious Russians imagined that Posse was in league with the spirit of darkness; the Swedes, who were no wiser, said that he knew many secret arts of magic. It was generally believed that when he opened a pillow, he got a soldier for every feather; that when he drew a ship with his stick on the ground it immediately became a large real ship; and that when he wanted to speak with Sten Sture, he mounted the towers of Wiborg Castle, and shaking a bridle in the air, an enchanted horse immediately appeared who carried him through the clouds to Brunkeberg and back again in the same manner, all within the four and twenty hours.

Sten Sture had already begun arming a considerable

army against the Russians; St. Erik's banner was brought with great pomp from Upsala, and he received the holy trophy kneeling before the high altar of the High Church in Stockholm. The fleet then set sail; but as it was late in autumn, it was long detained, and injured by continual storms. The ships were dispersed, and some frozen in, so that the men suffered much both from cold and hunger. When Sture at length arrived, he heard that Knut Posse by this stratagem at Wiborg had already defeated the enemy; he therefore left Sir Swante Sture, son of Nils Sture, as commander of the Swedes, and returned home for reinforcements. Sir Swante then marched into Russia; took Iwangorod, ravaged the country far and near, and returned with a plentiful booty. On Sir Sten's arrival with the fresh troops, he demanded Swante's assistance in a second invasion; but the latter refused, saying that his men were still suffering from the effects of the former. This exceedingly angered Herr Sten, who called Swante a traitor; on which Swante in wrath returned to Sweden, and accused Sten Sture before the Senate, by which means the long concealed enmity the principal Lords had long borne him at last broke forth.

CHAPTER V.

OF KING JOHN.

THE Senators, with the Archbishop at their head, now renounced all faith and obedience to Lord Sten Sture, and called in King John; however, as Sten was not willing to give in at once, a ruinous war broke out between both parties, having on one side the Bishops and great Lords with their suites and dependants, and on

the other, the peasants and burghers who sided with Lord Sten. He did not, however, so much as before possess the confidence of the people, who ascribed the ill success of the Finland expedition to his dilatoriness. The plagues, fires, and storms which at this time successively or together ravaged Stockholm, were conceived by the ignorant populace to be a sign of Heaven's displeasure with their Government, so that when John arrived with a numerous fleet, bearing six thousand German troops on board, Sten was shut into Stockholm. He had some thousand well armed men with him, and could rely on powerful assistance ; but as the Lords were eager for having John to reign over them, and Sten foresaw that a long and disastrous war would be the consequence, he determined to resign, on John's having renewed the promises he had made in Calmar in 1483, in addition to which Sir Sten obtained assurance both from the King and Council that he should not be called to account for any of his actions during the period of his administration. He retained in his own right large fiefs, and remained the most powerful man in the country. These preliminaries settled, he opened the gates of Stockholm on the 11th of November 1497, and went himself to meet and escort King John into the town, who received him with all possible honour, and asked him jokingly, "If the feast was already spread for him in the Castle, and furnished with meat and oil wherewithal to enliven the guests." Sir Sten then pointing to the Swedish Bishops behind the King, answered in haste: "That they know best who stand behind your Grace, for this is both of their baking and brewing ; and they may perhaps do as much for your Grace when they have had time to settle."

They then entered the Castle where nothing was

wanted to make a costly entertainment, and while the King and the ex-administrator spoke together of the Government of the kingdom, the former said : " You have left me my Lord a bad gift in Sweden : for the peasants whom God made to be slaves, you have made masters."

The King afterwards proceeded to Upsala together with the nobles, was crowned King, and dubbed many Swedes knights. At this time a knight's wife only could carry the distinguished title of lady ; and a King alone, and not an Administrator could dub knights. As for the last seven and twenty years there had been no King in the country ; knights and ladies had become very scarce ; and it is related that many of the Swedish women, incited by this vanity had urged their husbands to call in King John. Their wishes were now fulfilled. Fifty gentlemen, and amongst them babes in the cradle were knighted, for every one hastened to put the opportunity to profit. The King had ordered a great and very splendid entertainment, and when it was ended asked his Lords if they could say that anything had been wanting to his glory in the splendours of the feast ? All were silent, till one of the King's favourites, a German, stepped forward and said : " That one thing was wanting, and that was, after the Swedish Lords had been feasted at the King's table, his Grace ought to have called his guard, and caused the heads of all those traitors to be struck off on a silken carpet. The King was silent a moment, and cast down his eyes. " I would rather," he said, at last, " that thou wert dead, than that my innocence should be blotted with such a crime ;" and thus saying he entered his room, and would never see that man again.

King John was in many respects a good and noble-

mindful man, still he was unable to retain the reins of Government. The chief cause to which this is to be ascribed was certainly the ambition, envy, and restlessness of the Swedish nobles, by which both native and foreign Princes had in turn been dethroned; but John also contributed to his own misfortunes. Like the other Kings of the Union, he boldly broke his word, and preferred the Danes before the Swedes. Gothland was not restored; the Castles were given to foreign commanders, who by their cruelty and avarice irritated the people as they had done in the time of Erik of Pomerania. Heavy taxes further oppressed them, and the nobles did not receive as large fiefs as they could have wished; on the contrary, John deprived Sten Sture and several others of those which he had in the beginning so liberally bestowed. This was the cause of general displeasure, and a trifle soon brought it to an explosion. The King took possession for himself of a salmon fishery in the Dal River which Nils Kristersson Oxenstjerna had had before; and this so irritated the latter, that he killed the King's steward. John had at this time suffered a great defeat from the Ditmarschers; the Swedish Lords took courage, and went in a repentant mood to Sten Sture to seek reconciliation with him, and implore his assistance in expelling John, who soon arrived with a large fleet in Stockholm. John was in the Castle; the Swedish Lords in the town, and none dared to go abroad without hostages. Queen Christina had once with tears implored her husband's permission to attend mass in the High Church of Stockholm, and on leaving it for the Castle, Lord Sten and Lord Swante Sture stepped up to her on each side, to escort her home in all knightly courtesy; but when the people on the Castle walls saw this, they feared it

was an attack, and pointed their cannon on the gentlemen, who were obliged to quit their charge. Irritated by this, and to revenge the insult, the Lords now declared openly against the King, and commenced to raise the country against him. Sten soon arrived with the Dalmen before the gates of Stockholm, and was admitted by the burghers into the town. John left his Queen with a garrison of two thousand men in the Castle, and sailed himself to Denmark for reinforcements ; but meanwhile the whole country revolted, the Danes were driven out, and finally, in the end of 1501, Sten Sture was again appointed Administrator.

CHAPTER VI.

STEN STURE'S DEATH.

STOCKHOLM CASTLE was now straitly besieged by Hemming Gadd ; but Queen Christina defended herself valiantly. Though provisions began to fail, and the garrison to die in consequence of unnatural food, the Queen defended herself for eight months, till but eighty men remained of the two thousand, and every cellar and vault was full of dead bodies, when she at last gave up the Castle to Sture on the 27th of March 1502. She had treated with him for a free return ; but Sture detained her a whole year in Wadstena under a hundred different pretexts.

King John hoped to regain the country by force of arms, but was defeated. Prince Christian, who was his father's representative in Norway was more fortunate. He fell on West Gothland, and besieged Elfsborg, whose Governor, Erik Gyllenstjerna, fled either through cowardice or treachery, and was therefore murdered by

the enraged West Gothland peasantry. The remains of the garrison begged to capitulate with Christian, but he insisted on their surrendering unconditionally. They then in their despair determined to defend themselves to the last, and asked support of Sten Sture, who immediately despatched Sir Åke Johansson Natt Och Dag with a body of men. Sir Åke rode on with all speed with his cavalry, but when he early one misty morning reached Elfsborg, the Castle was already taken, and the whole garrison cut to pieces by the merciless Christian. The Danes now lay asleep in their tents, and Sir Åke could conveniently have fallen upon them; however he ordered his trumpeters to sound the attack; they hesitated, thinking the Danes should be taken by surprise. "Blow!" cried Herr Åke, "otherwise I shall make my arrow fly through thy body. Think ye it is fit to surprise a King's son and so many noble gentlemen, instead of venturing a fair combat with them?" The trumpets sounded, and Herr Åke rushed on with his knights, and in the commencement made great havoc amongst the half awoken Danes; but Sir Otto Rud their leader defended himself valiantly, and a Danish standard being set up, the troops rallied around it. Sir Åke not having taken time to await his infantry, was at last driven with great loss out of the camp, after which Prince Christian, with fire and sword and dreadful havoc, marched through West and East Gothland, and then returned to Skåne. And this was Christian the Tyrant's first exploit in Sweden.

Sir Otto Rud, of whom we have just spoken, always stood in great favour with King John, and was a brave and merry man. They once were sitting together reading legends of King Arthur and his knights. "How does it happen, Sir Otto," said the King, "that no

knights like Gavian and Percival are now to be found?" "Ay," answered Sir Otto, "because no Court is now to be found like that of King Arthur." John laughed, and granted that Sir Otto was right.

This same Sir Otto had possession of Bohus Castle in 1502 ; not far from which lay Sir Nils Rautsen with a Swedish garrison in Olofsborg Castle. On Christmas Eve, much snow having fallen, and the ground being quite white, Sir Otto resorted to the following stratagem. He caused his soldiers to draw white shirts over their armour, advanced with them straight to Olofsborg just at the time he imagined that the Swedes were sitting feasting round the Christmas board. The sentries were not able distinctly to distinguish the white shirts from the snow, and so the Danes entered the Castle unperceived. Sir Otto Rud had the gates immediately shut and guarded, and surrounded the hall in which the garrison, seated amidst their flagons and barrels, were either taken prisoners or cut down. Nils Rautsen alone broke through them, and rushed up a little tower ; here with his sword, lance, and hurling of stones, he defended himself through the whole of Christmas night, and was not to be prevailed on to surrender till late on the following day.

Otto Rud received large possessions from King John as the reward of his bravery and good fortune ; and distinguished himself under his son Christian as a brave leader against the Swedes. Some time after having undertaken a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, he died in Germany, and thus there is nothing more to relate of Sir Otto Rud in this place.

Meanwhile Lord Sten Sture at the intermediation of the Hanseatic Towns, thought proper to permit Queen Christina's return to Denmark. He had treated her

with the greatest distinction and courtesy during the whole of her imprisonment, and now he went to Wadstena, whence he escorted her to the Danish frontier. On his return, he fell suddenly and violently ill, and it was with the greatest difficulty that his friends were able to conduct him to Jönköping where he died the 13th of December, 1503. Many have said that his sickness was the consequence of poison, which the Queen's physician is supposed to have given him at the frontier; others again believe that Sir Swante Sture's second wife, Lady Martha, had secretly poisoned him, that her husband might the sooner succeed him in the Administratorship.

Great disorders might have been the consequence, and King John have found it an easy undertaking to regain Sweden; but Hemming Gadd, the irreconcilable enemy of the Danes and the faithful friend of the Stures, prevented anything of the kind. He made the few witnesses of the Administrator's death swear to secrecy, and then concealed the event in the following manner. The corpse was laid in a sledge, and conveyed secretly up to Stockholm; but one of Sten Sture's servants by name Per Byresson, who was very like him in person, put on his clothes and rode his horse, but pretended to have a severe attack in his eyes from which Lord Sten often suffered. He therefore bound up his face, and when he stopped at any place went immediately to bed; the windows being all shut, on account of the sick Administrator's weak eyes, and every one who had affairs to settle was obliged during the time to apply to Hemming Gadd. In this way the journey to Stockholm proceeded, where Hemming Gadd had appointed Swante Sture and his friends to be in readiness. Matters being thus arranged, Sten

Sture's death was announced, and Swante Sture at the same time chosen Administrator, and the Castles made over to him.

Lord Sten left but one daughter, who was a nun in Wadstena Convent. His body and that of his wife were first interred with much pomp in Gripsholm Convent, but afterwards removed to Kernebo Church in the neighbourhood. King John III thought this burial place not of sufficient distinction, and begged Duke Charles to remove them a third time to the Cathedral of Strängnäs, which was accordingly done, and new and costly coffins made for the occasion. This was in 1576. Nearly a hundred years after, 1675, Magnus Gabriel de la Gardie caused a chapel roofed with copper to be raised over them, and a stone with an honourable inscription to be laid over the grave. About one hundred years later, Gustavus III erected a monument over the grave-stone. Thus has each successive century brought its tribute of admiration and gratitude for the noble services done to his native land by Sten Sture.

CHRONOLOGY.

THE STENKIL DYNASTY.

A.D. 1061.—Stenkil favoured Christianity. Warred with Norway. Died A.D. 1066.

Häkan the Red, favoured Christianity. Peaceful. Died 1079.

Inge the Elder, and Halstan. Inge attempted to out-root Paganism by force. Deposed.

A.D. 1100.—Blot Sven, King of the heathens. Murdered by Inge. Inge again King. War with Norway. Died 1112.

Philip, and Inge the Younger. Philip died 1118. Inge reigned peacefully. Died 1129.

Ragnwald Knaphöfde and Magnus Nilsson strove for the crown. The Battle of Fotewig 1134.

THE SWERKER AND ERIK DYNASTIES.

A.D. 1100.—Swerker the Elder. Before King of East Gothland. Peaceful. Danes invade Wärend. Killed 1155.

Erik the Holy, or St. Erik, a mild and disinterested law-giver. Converted the Finns. Killed 1160.

Charles VII. Swea and Gotha King. Banished Erik's murderers. First Archbishops in Sweden. Killed 1168.

Knut. Disturbed reign. Sigtuna destroyed by the Esthoni-ans. Swerker Karlsson taken as Co-Regent. Knut died in 1199.

A.D. 1200.—Swerker the Younger. Murdered Erik's children at Elgarås 1205. Exempted the clergy from taxes. Fell in 1210.

A.D. 1200.—Erik, the first King in Sweden who was crowned. Died 1216.

John the Pious. Extended the privileges of the Clergy. Unfortunate expedition against Esthonia. Died 1222.

Erik the Lamé, and Lisper. Rebellion of the Folkungar. Expelled 1229. Knut the Tall becomes King. Knut fell in 1234. Erik again King. Birger Jarl takes Ostrabothnia. Erik died 1250.

FOLKUNGAR LNASTY.

A.D. 1200.—Waldemar. His father Birger Jarl ruled the kingdom. Made good laws. Founded Stockholm. Died 1266. Waldemar deposed 1275.

Magnus Ladulås deposed his brother Waldemar. Improved the laws. Quelled the Folkungar. Introduced the service of knights. Forbid lodging by force. Died 1290.

A.D. 1300.—Birger. Torkel Knutsson guardian till 1303. Ruled well. Beheaded in 1306. The kingdom divided. The King's brothers murdered at Nyköping in 1317. Birger deposed 1318.

Magnus Smek. Matts Kettilmundsson guardian. Skåne, Halland, and Bleking redeemed. Magnus disputes with the nobles. His son Erik Co-Regent from 1342 to 1359. Magnus gives away Skåne, Halland, and Bleking, 1360.

Håkan Co-Regent 1362. Both deposed 1364.

FOREIGN KINGS.

A.D. 1300.—Albrecht. Favoured the Germans. Disputed with the Lords. Bo Jonsson Grip more powerful than the King. Battle of Falköping 1389. Deposed.

Margaret, Queen before of Norway and Denmark. Founded the Calmar Union 1397. Took Erik of Pomerania as Co-Regent. Favoured the Danes. Had unjust Stewards. Died 1412.

A.D. 1400.—Erik XIII. Unhappy war with Holstein. Oppressed the Swedes with cruel tax gatherers. Revolt of the Dalecar-

lians under Engelbrecht 1433. Engelbrecht murdered 1436. Erik deposed 1439. Karl Knutsson Administrator till 1441.

Christopher licentious and wasteful. New law adopted 1442. Famine. Died 1448.

Charles VIII. Unhappy expedition to Gothland. War with Denmark. Rebellion of the Archbishop. Deposed 1467.

Christian I. King of Denmark and Norway. A miser. Imprisoned the Archbishop. Deposed 1464.

END OF VOL. I.

